Mar. 23, 1992

THE NEW YORKER

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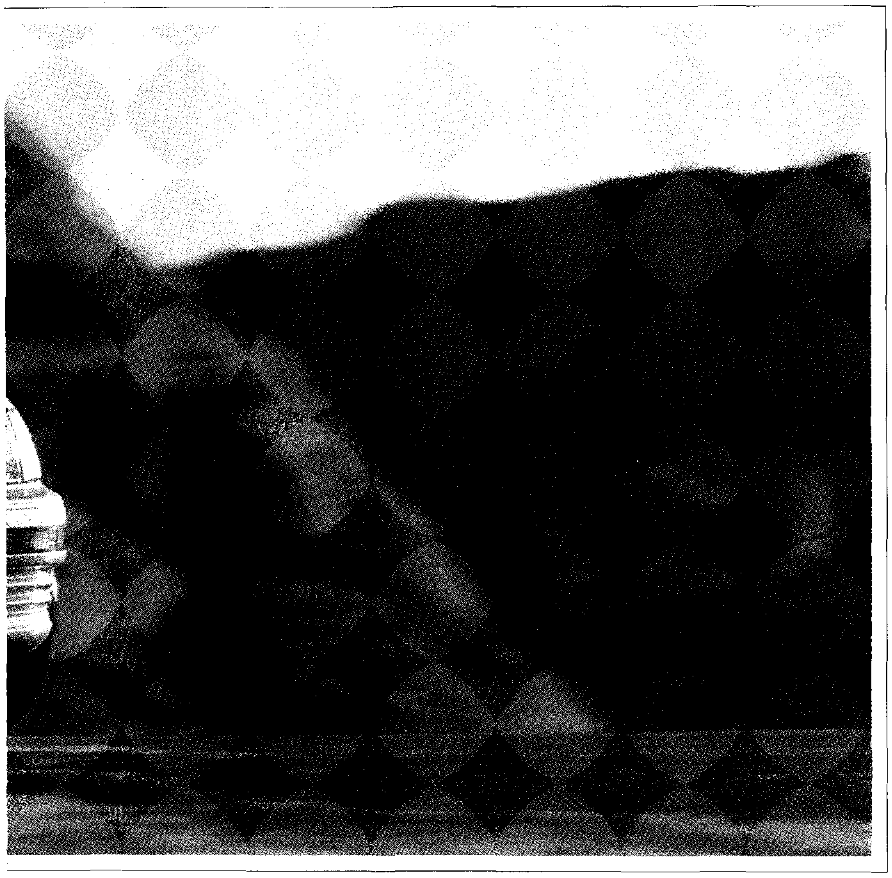

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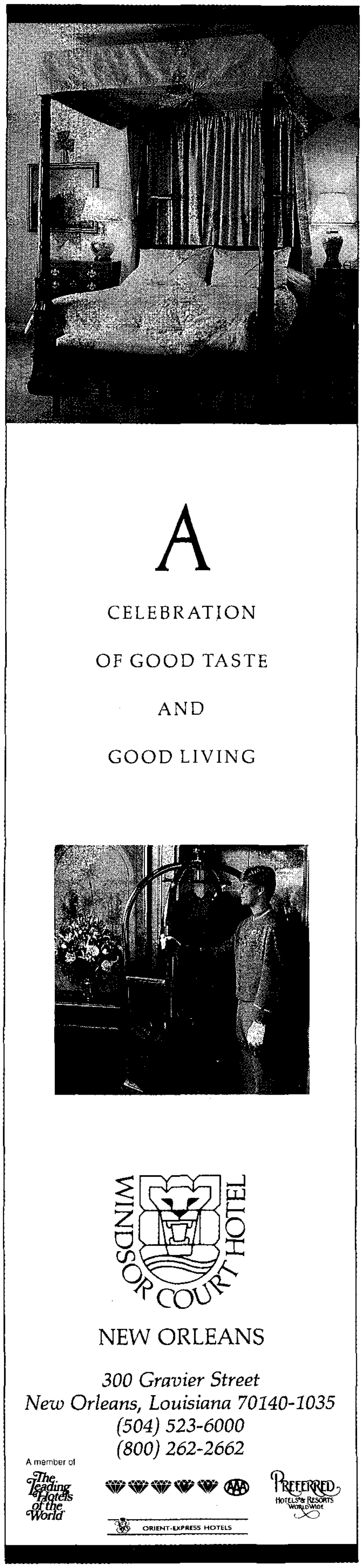

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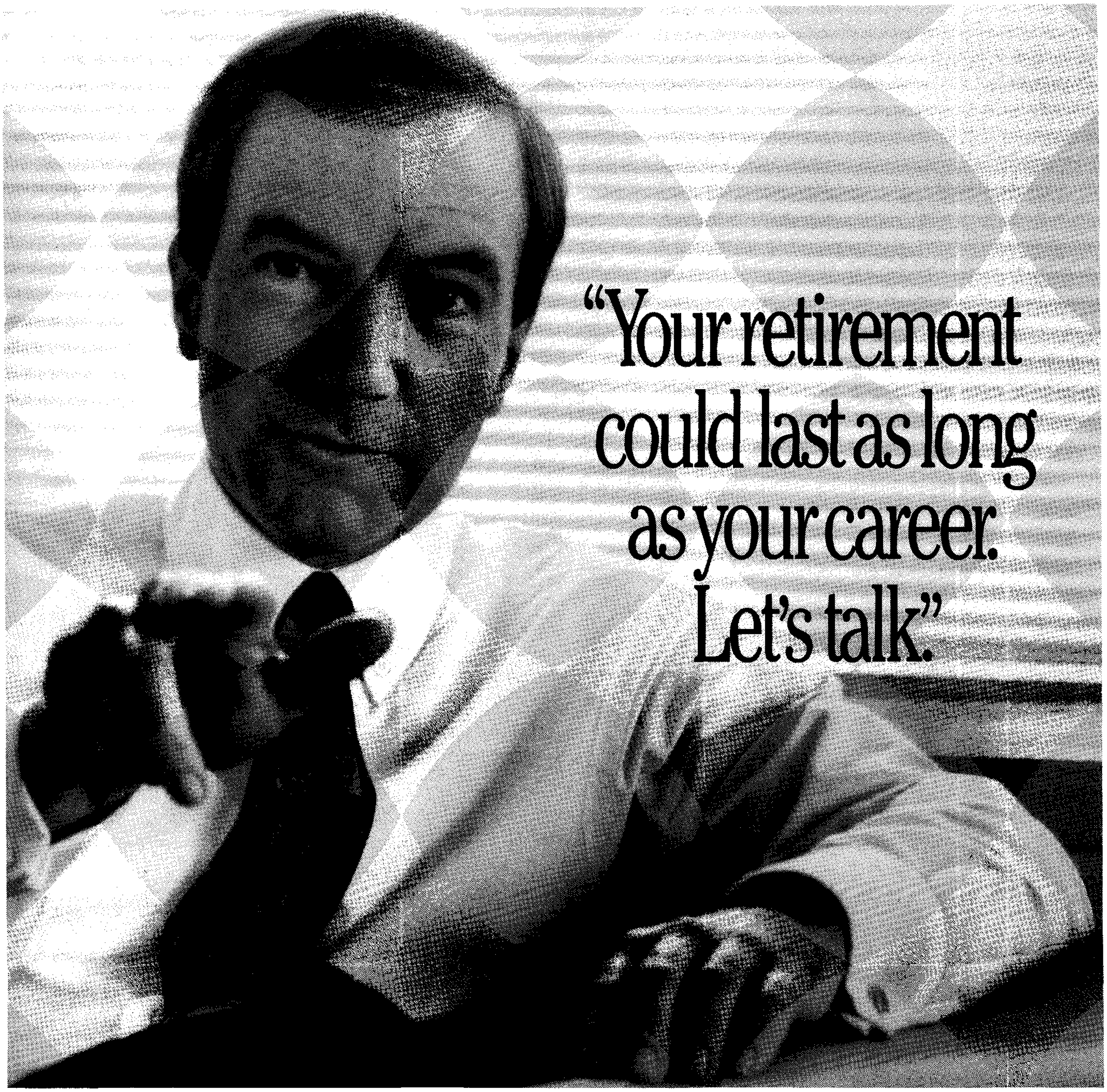

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

PATRICK BREEN firmly believes in the integrity of cartoon characters: "I've tracked them since I was very small and every year I discover fresh truths there." We were sitting in a crowded corner at Lox Around the Clock, a downtown café, where actors, writers, and directors gathered last week to celebrate the opening, at the Manhattan Class Company (120 West 28th Street), of four one-act plays, including Mr. Breen's "St. Stanislaus Outside the House." "This is not the first time I've dealt with cartoons," he told us. "A few years ago, I wrote a play called 'The Call of the Wily.' In it, Wile E. Coyote has killed the Road Runner and is drinking in a bar, trying to deal with what he's done."

The characters in the new play make Wile E. look like Bambi. It's set on the Lower East Side, where five teen-age street punks, awaiting sunrise, argue cartoon characters in a sort of verbal slam dance. "Compared to Wile E., these are real toughs," Mr. Breen explained. "They might not be alive tomorrow, so they fill today with cartoon memories."

Sitting across from Mr. Breen, and looking skeptical, was the play's director, Ethan Silverman, who also wrote one of the plays on the program. Mr. Silverman sees a more redeeming function for cartoon characters. "In a movie like 'Wayne's World,' the characters are entrenched in the modern culture. But our characters use that popular trash to rise above the muck—the cartoons actually set them free."

"Don't sell cartoons short," Mr. Breen said. "There's something ingeniously dark about them. On a Sunday morning, an animated hunter getting flattened by a steamroller means one thing; at the end of a long day, it means something else. Let's be honest. Wile E. Coyote's not in the desert to give the Road Runner a hug, he's there to drop an anvil on his head."

We were joined by Seth Gilliam, the twenty-three-year-old actor who plays Curb, one of the punks. Seth sees both good and bad in cartoons. "Take Dumbo, for example," he said. "When the stupid elephant with the big ears gets airborne, who can help but smile? But now, the cartoon world seems less defined. When I was a kid and saw someone get blown up, I laughed. Now I say 'Oh my God!' and change the channel."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

THE BEST OF FORBIDDEN BROADWAY—A tenth-anniversary edition of Gerard Alessandrini's show, featuring both past highlights and new material. Previews begin March 20. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

CHEKHOV VERY FUNNY—The Pearl Theatre Company winds up its season with four short comedies by Chekhov. Previews begin March 20. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

James Naughton, Stockard Channing, and the children in "Four Baboons Adoring the Sun"

CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER—Judd Hirsch, David Margulies, and Tony Shalhoub in a new play by Herb Gardner. Daniel Sullivan directed. Previews through March 21. Opens March 22 at 6:30. (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN—A drama by the Chilean playwright Ariel Dorfman, which stars Glenn Close, Richard Dreyfuss, and Gene Hackman. Mike Nichols directed. Preview on March 16. Opens March 17 at 6:45. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

THE END OF THE DAY—A new play by Jon Robin Baitz, the author of "The Substance of Fire." Previews begin March 20. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE—Six singers and dancers—Jerry Dixon, Doug Eskew, Milton Craig Nealy, Kevin Ramsey, Jeffrey D. Sams, and Glenn Turner—star in a celebration of the music of Louis Jordan. This show originated in London, where it is still playing the West End. Previews begin March 20. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

FOUR BABOONS ADORING THE SUN—Stockard Channing and James Naughton lead the cast of a new play by John Guare. Directed by Peter Hall. Previews through March 18 at 2. Opens March 18 at 6:45. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

GET USED TO IT—A new gay musical by Tom Wilson Weinberg. Previews March 18-21. Opens March 22 at 7. (Courtyard Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 869-3530.)

GUYS AND DOLLS—Jerry Zaks has directed this new production of the 1950 musical by Frank Loesser (score and lyrics) and Jo Swerling and Abe Burrows (book). (It was based on a Damon Runyon story.) Peter Gallagher, Nathan Lane, Carolyn Mignini, and Faith Prince lead a forty-member cast. In previews. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

HAMLET—Stephen Lang has the title role and Elizabeth McGovern is Ophelia in this Roundabout Theatre Company production. Paul Weidner directed. In previews. (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

JAKE'S WOMEN—Alan Alda stars in a new play by Neil Simon, which Gene Saks directed. Previews through March 23. Opens March 24 at 6:30. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

LYPSINKA! A DAY IN THE LIFE—A new show written and performed by John Epperson. Presented by New York Theatre Workshop. Previews begin March 20. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200.)

THE MASTER BUILDER—The National Actors Theatre production of Ibsen's play. With Earle Hyman, Lynn Redgrave, Maryann Plunkett, Madeleine Potter, and others. Tony Randall directed. Previews March 17-18. Opens March 19 at 8. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE—A revival of Tennessee Williams' classic 1947 play. Jessica Lange is Blanche, Alec Baldwin is Stanley, Amy Madigan is Stella, and Timothy Carhart is Mitch. Directed by Gregory Mosher. In previews. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE—Val Kilmer and Jeanne Tripplehorn in a production of John Ford's Jacobean tragedy, which JoAnne Akalaitis directed. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

THE VIRGIN MOLLY—A play by Quincy Long. Previews through March 24. Opens March 25 at 8, and runs through April 12. (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-8755.)

YORK THEATRE COMPANY—Presenting a revival of LITTLE ME, the 1962 musical comedy by Cy Coleman (score), Carolyn Leigh (lyrics), and Neil Simon (book). Opens March 20 at 8. (2 E. 90th St. 534-5366.)

NEW THIS SEASON

AND—Ron Silver stars in a play by Roger Rosenblatt. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes March 29.)

BEAU JEST—A comedy by James Sherman. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

BEFORE IT HITS HOME—A play by Cheryl L. West about a young black man with AIDS and his family. With Frankie R. Faison, Yvette Hawkins, and James McDaniel. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes March 22.)

THE BELLS; OR, THE POLISH JEW—Everett Quinton has adapted an adaptation of a hundred-and-twenty-year-old "dramatic study." He also plays all the roles. Eureka directed. (Charles Ludlam, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

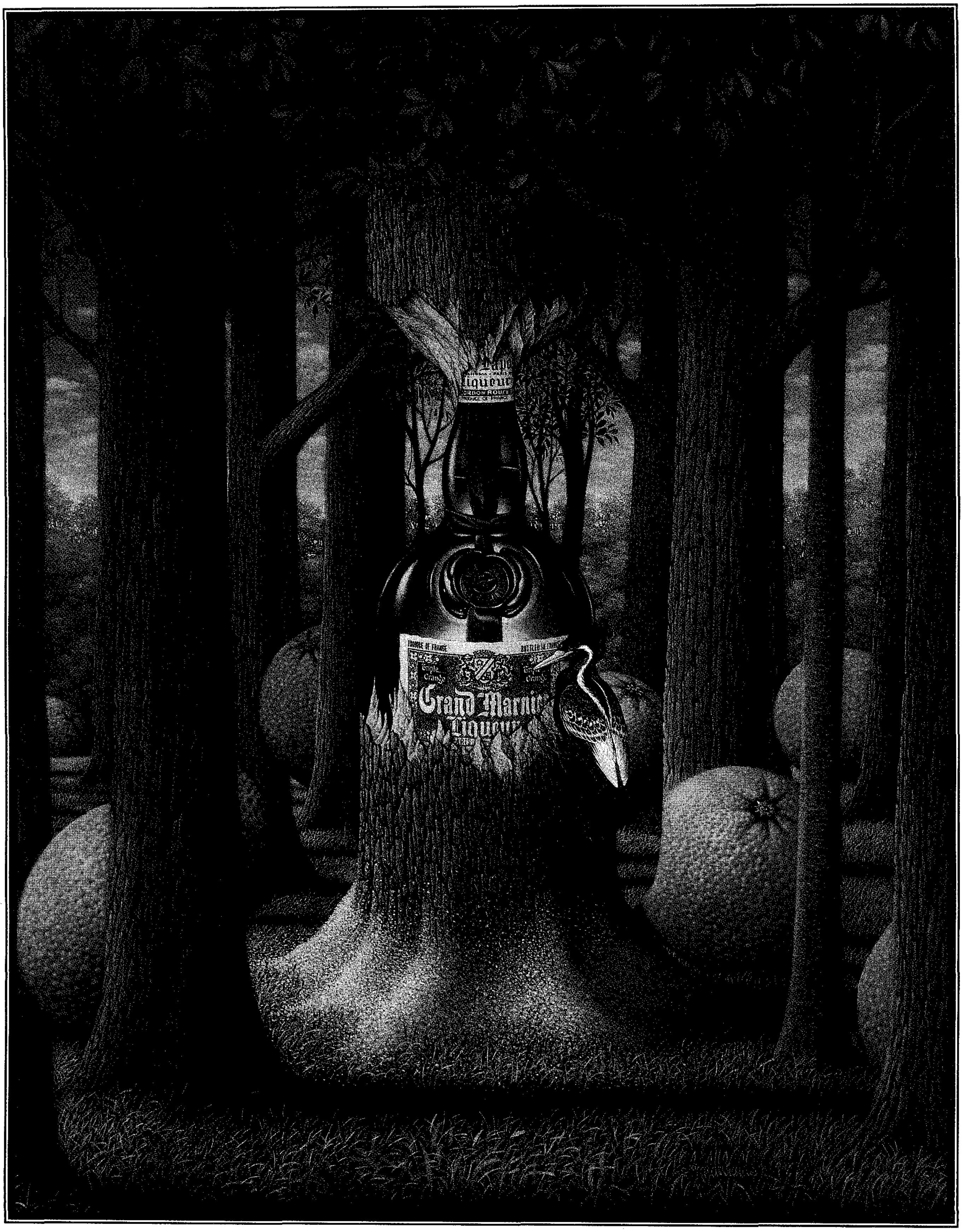
BERNIE'S BAR MITZVAH—Written and directed by Howard Perloff, this you-are-part-of-the-show show includes an array of food (complete with a Viennese table) in the ticket price. Ian Bonds plays Bernie. (24-Karat Club, 327 W. 44th St. 1-800 231-8607.)

BOESMAN & LENA—This revival of Athol Fugard's spellbinding play is more openly emotional than most other stagings have been. Keith David and Lynne Thigpen are the intrepid Cape Coloureds and Tsepo Mokone is the black African, whom the couple shelter at considerable risk. All three perform splendidly, under Mr. Fugard's direction. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/10/92.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Closes March 22.)

CATSKILLS ON BROADWAY—A festival of ethnicity and all but unbroken laughter. Freddie Roman and Mal Z. Lawrence are the Jewish comedians; Dick Capri handles the Italians. The jokes explode around us, and there isn't a dud in the lot. Marilyn Michaels, the fourth member of the company, does imitations of imitations. (12/23/91) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

CRAZY FOR YOU—Lightly based on "Girl Crazy," which opened in 1930, this glorious show is actually a celebration of the music of George Gershwin and the lyrics of his brother Ira—nineteen songs in all—and also of the witty, imaginative choreography of Susan Stroman. Ken Ludwig wrote the lively book. Harry Groener and Jodi Benson are the lead actor/dancers. The scenery is by Robin Wagner; the costumes are by William Ivey Long; and the masterly direction is by Mike Ockrent. Bless 'em all. (3/2/92) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

DANCING AT LUGHNASA—How you respond to Brian Friel's wistful autobiographical play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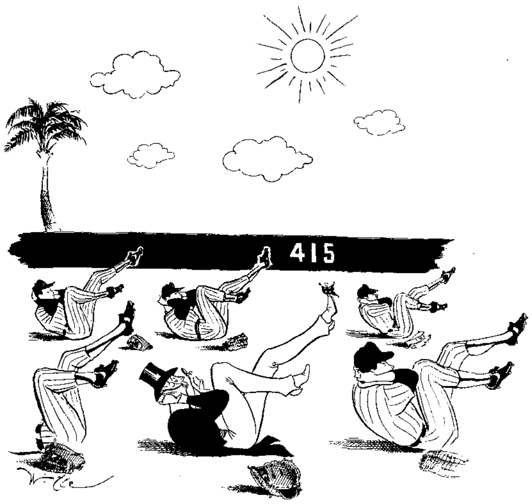


depends a good deal on your personality and preoccupations. Either you will find it lovely and lyrical or it will strike you as the memory play from Hell. (11/4/91) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

First Is Supper—The American Jewish Theatre presents a play by the comedian Shelley Berman. (Susan Bloch, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes March 29.)

From the Mississippi Delta—In eleven scenes, Endesha Ida Mae Holland dramatizes her own rise (and journey) from the Delta (where she had been a teen-age prostitute) to the University of Minnesota and triumph in academia. The leading character, though, is her mother, a midwife called Aint Baby, who is very well portrayed by Cheryl Lynn Bruce. The role of the author is split between Ms. Bruce, Sybil Walker, and Jacqueline Williams, and the result is a lively and merry evening. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Grandchild of Kings—Harold Prince's enthralling adaptation of the first two volumes of Sean O'Casey's memoirs is set—beautifully—by Eugene Lee in a square in Dublin. The performances, all of them satisfying, are by the members of the Irish Repertory Theatre Company; Padraic Moyles, Patrick Fitzgerald, and Chris O'Neill are Sean as child, young man, and old man, and the invaluable Pauline Flanagan is Sean's mother. Traditional Irish songs and dances accompany the action every inch of the way. (2/24/92) (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 477-7900.)

Homo Sapien Shuffle—A play written and directed by Richard Caliban. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes March 29.)

Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother—An adaptation of a novella by Gabriel García Márquez; directed by Jorge Alí Triana. Performed in Spanish; simultaneous-English-translation sets are available. (Repertorio Español, Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Julie Halston's Lifetime of Comedy—For up-to-the-minute coverage of what it is like to be "divorced, over thirty, hormonally imbalanced," you can't do better than the wit and wisdom of this multitalented actress-comedienne-sage. She's a little like Joan Rivers, a little like Joan Collins, and a little like St. Joan. Also a little like ZaSu Pitts. Among our favorite moments in this autobiographical show are the story of events leading up to Miss Halston's tragic divorce, the visit to the breast doctor, and the ritual reading and textual analysis of the *Times* wedding announcements. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

The Lady from Havana—An encore presentation of a play by Max Ferra about a Cuban family in Miami. Three performances a week are in English; three are in Spanish. Performances resume March 18. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 869-3530.)

Lotto (Experience the Dream)—Cliff Roquemore's comedy about a Los Angeles family who wins the lottery. (Heckscher, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. 369-6500.)

Manhattan Class Company—Presenting a festival of one-act plays by Jacquelyn Reingold, Ethan Silverman, Oni Faida Lampley, and Patrick Breen. (120 W. 28th St. 727-7722. Closes March 21.)

Marvin's Room—A play about dying, suffering, and sacrifice in one family, written in a style so frisky as to set the teeth permanently on edge. There is a fine performance by Mark Rosenthal as a smoldering young man. Also with Alice Drummond, Laura Esterman, and Tim Monsion. Scott McPherson is the dramatist, David Petrarca the director. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

The Most Happy Fella—This is one musical we think the world could be without and feel no sorrow. The story of a girl forced to content herself with some old duffer because some other old duffer wanted to teach everyone a lesson about making do with what life has to offer, it's pseudo opera superimposed on pseudo Americana. As for Gerald Gutierrez's Goodspeed Opera production, it's your basic slightly-better-than-average dinner-theatre revival. What's the rumpus? (2/24/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Opal—A new musical by Robert Nassif Lindsey, presented by the Lamb's Theatre Company. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

The Other Side of Paradise—Keir Dullea plays F. Scott Fitzgerald in this one-man show written by John Kane. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 563-1684.)

Private Lives—Joan Collins does just fine as Amanda in Arvin Brown's production of the Coward play. (In any case, she was once in a "Road" movie with Bing and Bob, so we won't hear a word against her.) But the real star of this revival—the source of its elegance and style—is Simon Jones, who finds many adorable ways of reinventing the role of Elyot. (3/2/92) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Closes April 5.)

The Real Live Brady Bunch—Episodes from the acclaimed TV series, reënacted by the Annoyance Theatre, of Chicago. Something called "The Real Live Game Show" comes first. (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Return to the Forbidden Planet—Gabriel Barré, Julee Cruise, Robert McCormick, and Louis Tucci are all appealing in this light-minded entertainment, a patchwork of beloved pop songs stitched together with Shakespeareana. The show, however, has almost nothing to do with the cult movie it is based on, and still less to do with "The Tempest." Written and directed by Bob Carlton, it is more than anything else an occasion to laugh a bit and rock out a lot. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Search and Destroy—A labored and heavily ironic play about a young man who reads an inspirational self-help book and resolves to make a movie of it; his quest for the requisite cash, which causes him to sink deeper and deeper into corruption, makes up the plot. All in all, it's an exhausting evening, but the performances, under David Chambers' direction, are good. With Griffin Dunne, as the hapless fellow, and Stephen McHattie and Keith Szarabajka, among others. (3/9/92) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes April 5.)

Shmulnik's Waltz—Allan Knee's comedy, with music by David Shire. Seen earlier this season at the Jewish Rep. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 967-9077.)

Sight Unseen—Donald Margulies' engrossing new play, which is about an Eric Fischl-type painter who decides to look up an old girlfriend he once treated badly, takes the contemporary art scene to task. Technically, it also plays around with time a good deal, though never sloppily or gratuitously. You end up being affected by a curious kind of resonance—it's earned, not something you've brought with you into the theatre. (2/3/92) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. The final performance here is March 22; on March 26, the show reopens at the Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., 477-2477.)

The Substance of Fire—Jon Robin Baitz's play about an intransigent publisher at odds with his grown children, having moved from Playwrights Horizons, seems stronger than ever in this more formal theatre. The remarkable Ron Rifkin continues in the leading role, and he is ably supported by the members of the original company—Patrick Breen, Maria Tucci, Sarah Jessica Parker, and Jon Tenney. (3/9/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Tubes—A performance work by Blue Man Group about art and other matters. (Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.)

LONG RUNS

BREAKING LEGS: The Mafia meets Off Broadway. Philip Bosco and Vincent Gardenia play a pair of mobsters who back a new play in order to win a young dramatist for Gardenia's daughter. Tom Dulack wrote the comedy; John Tillinger directed it. With Larry Storch, Karen Valentine, Ronald Maccone, and Nick Wyman. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.). . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.). . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run turns thirty-two in May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.). . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Stuart Ross's loving tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.). . . **GRAND HOTEL:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.). . . **LIPS TOGETHER, TEETH APART:** Two couples share a beach house on Fire Island over the Fourth of July weekend, in Terrence McNally's very funny play about a number of serious matters. With Christine Baranski, Joanne Camp, Jonathan Hadary, and Brian Kerwin; directed by John Tillinger. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.). . . **LOST IN YONKERS:** There's not one glimmer of honesty or authenticity in this family melodrama by Neil Simon. Set in Yonkers during the Second World War, it's about what happens when a cowering, pathetic man has to leave his two adolescent sons with his intimidating mother for the better part of a year. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.). . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.). . . **MISS SAIGON:** Oh, the horror! The horror! (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.). . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.). . . **PAGEANT:** A musical spoof of beauty contests. Book and lyrics by Bill Russell and Frank Kelly and music by Albert Evans. Conceived and directed by Robert Longbottom. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 262-3333.). . . **PERFECT CRIME:** A murder mystery by Warren Manzi. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401.). . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **THE SECRET GARDEN:** This lovely musical adaptation of the classic children's story by Frances Hodgson Burnett isn't just a kiddie show. Subtle, charming, intelligent, and wholly literary in its approach to adaptation, it manages both to be faithful to the spirit of the book and to comment on the particular moment in time that produced it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.). . . **SONG OF SINGAPORE:** A musical with a promising concept: turn a Polish veterans' hall into a Singapore night club, circa 1941, and spill murder and mayhem onto the premises. Unfortunately, the lavish settings (by John Lee Beatty) and the musical talent cannot conceal a very thin story and a host of excruciatingly bad jokes. (17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. 228-0844.). . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** The sets by Tony Walton, the direction and choreography by Tommy Tune, the costumes by Willa Kim, and the row upon row of Ziegfeld girls make a feast for the eyes, but the funny bone and heart are neglected. Keith Carradine makes an engaging Rogers, but that is not enough, despite Cy Coleman's pleasant score. (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.)

DANCE

A FEW weeks ago, down in Greenwich Village, we stopped by one of the sound stages in the Industria Superstudio, near the Hudson River. We'd been alerted that Merce Cunningham, filmmaker Elliot Caplan, and the Cunningham Company were there, shooting one of Mr. Cunningham's new works, "Beach Birds." When we arrived, we saw many people doing many different jobs, but there was no sense of rush or bustle; the atmosphere was sharply focussed yet calm. We slipped into a director's chair, next to David Vaughan, the archivist for the Cunningham Company, and started to look around. Two walls of the huge room had windows facing the river, and for a moment we were mesmerized by the soft gray waters and the luminous afternoon sky. Then we studied the dancers—lean, handsome people with intently alert faces. Nine or ten of them were in the middle of the room on a large wooden stage. They were in costume: leotards and tights with boldly marked areas of inky black and foaming white. The long sleeves of the leotards, part of the black zone, extended into gloves. Never had these dancers' hands looked so creaturely. "Beach birds . . . seagulls," we murmured. Mr. Vaughan smiled and said, "The costumes were actually designed quite separately, by Marsha Skinner, an artist from New Mexico. She came to New York, sketched people in class, then went home and worked on her own."

We thought about this while a gaffer sprayed white smoke thickly around the stage, the assistant director said "places," and the cameras rolled. Amid the artificial fog, the black-and-white figures seemed unmoored. The more precise their gestures and poses, the more unearthly they became. Then we had a wild thought: suppose you didn't know that Mr. Cunningham's process of composition relied on chance procedures, or that he and his collaborators worked independently of one another. Suppose all the resonances among dancing, sound, and design that one takes as isolated coincidences within a given dance could be counted on somehow to flow together into a larger organic meaning. Suppose there were more to coincidence in the universe than mere chance.

At that moment, Mr. Vaughan's voice gently broke in on our train of thought. "There is an epigraph to 'Beach Birds,'" he said. "It goes, 'Between the river and the ocean, Beach Birds.'"

MERCE CUNNINGHAM DANCE COMPANY—In a two-week engagement that will run through March 29. March 17 at 7:30: "Neighbors," "Beach Birds" (New York première), and "Trackers." . . ¶ March 18 at 8: "Exchange," "Native Green," and "Loosestrife" (New York première). . . . ¶ March 19 at 8: "Neighbors," "Channels/Inserts," and "Loosestrife." . . ¶ March 20 at 8: "August Pace," "Beach Birds," and "Trackers." . . ¶ March 21 at 2: "Neighbors," "Inventions," and "August Pace." . . ¶ March 21 at 8: "Inventions," "Channels/Inserts," and "Loosestrife." . . ¶ March 22 at 3: "Exchange," "Beach Birds," and "August Pace." . . ¶ March 24 at 8: "Inventions," "Change of Address" (New York première), and "Trackers." . . ¶ March 25 at 8: "Channels/Inserts," "Change of Address," and "Loosestrife." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

FELD BALLETS/NY—Final performances of the engagement. March 17 at 8: "Love Song Waltzes," "Savage Glance," and "Wolfgang Strategies." . . ¶ March 18 at 8: "Ion," "Evoe," "Love Song Waltzes," and "Wolfgang Strategies." . . ¶ March 19 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Skara Brae," and "Wolfgang Strategies." . . ¶ March 20 at 8: "'Ah Scarlatti," "Clave," "To the Naked Eye," and "Endsong." . . ¶ March 21 at 8: "Clave," "To the Naked Eye," "Love Song Waltzes," and "The Jig Is Up." . . ¶ March 22 at 2: "Contra Pose," "Ion," "Charmed Lives," and "Skara Brae." . . ¶ March 22 at 7:30: "Hello Fancy" (performed by students from the New Ballet School), "Clave," "Evoe," "Endsong," and "Wolfgang Strategies." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800.)

KEITH GLASSMAN—With five other dancers in "Backfield," a new, evening-length work. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. March 19-20 at 8:30. Tickets at the door on the evenings of the performances.)

PEGGY SPINA TAP COMPANY—A première, as well as twelve works from the repertory, with musical accompaniment from the Joel Forrester quartet. (Spina Loft, 115 Prince St. March 21-22 at 8. For information about tickets, call 674-8885.)

MUNA TSENG AND PHILL NIBLOCK—The choreographer and the composer present a new collaboration. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. March 19-22 at 8:30. Tickets at the door on the evenings of the performances.)

CARLOTA SANTANA SPANISH DANCE COMPANY—A twelve-member troupe in the opening performances of a one-week engagement that will run through March 29. The program consists of "El Encuentro de Dos Mundos" (première), "Quebrantos" (a solo work), "Las Raices de Almería," and "Tablao Flamenco." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. March 24-25 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE

FRED is a friend of a friend, and, over the past couple of years, we've dropped by various Irish bars to hear him play trombone. We saw him twice at the Nancy Whiskey Pub, where he romped through several sweaty hours with the Rumprollers, whose signature song is "Let's Rump the Night Away." And we saw him once at Paddy Reilly's, on Second Avenue, where he played in a raucous, genre-bending outfit known as Black 47. Unfortunately, we have also missed many gigs. We've never seen Fred play trombone with the Irish-born singer Pierce Turner, with Tony Bennett's orchestra, or with the heavy-metal band Angat. We've never seen the short film "Homage to Artaud," in which Fred sits and stares obsessively at an eggbeater. We've only heard secondhand reports of the East Village performance piece that friends remember as "Modern Dancer + Fred."

It has always been difficult to predict where, if anywhere, Fred's projects would lead. In recent months, though, there has been an extraordinary buzz about Black 47. The band is led by a politically minded Irish expatriate named Larry Kirwan—to be fair, Fred also has a last name, Parcells—and its shows at Paddy Reilly's have attracted a flood of musicians and record-company executives, not to mention Greenwich Villagers of every variety. We recently stopped by the bar at two in the morning, and the show was so packed that the doorman just shook his head sadly and said, "You can go in if you want, but it's hell in there."

Black 47 has just released its first album, a wild, sardonic outing that manages to quote rock, reggae, and rap, among other things. (The record has already been raved about in *Rolling Stone*, which is astonishing when one considers that it's only available at Paddy Reilly's.) Black 47 is also starting to play considerably larger venues: the band will be at the Lone Star Roadhouse on March 17 and at Wetlands on March 27. It would appear that Fred's dancing days are over.

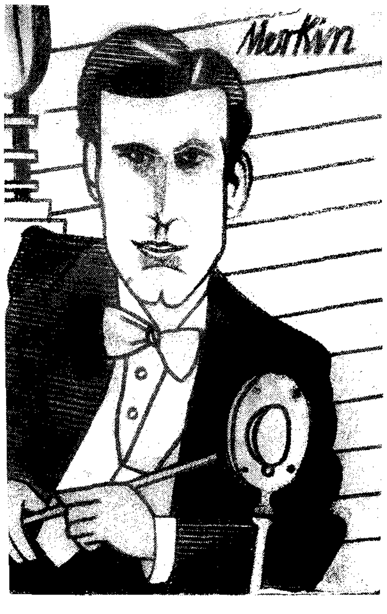
(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The Welsh vocalist **IRIS WILLIAMS** completes an engagement in the Oak Room on March 21. **MARY CLEERE HARAN** succeeds her, beginning on March 24. Shows at nine-thirty Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

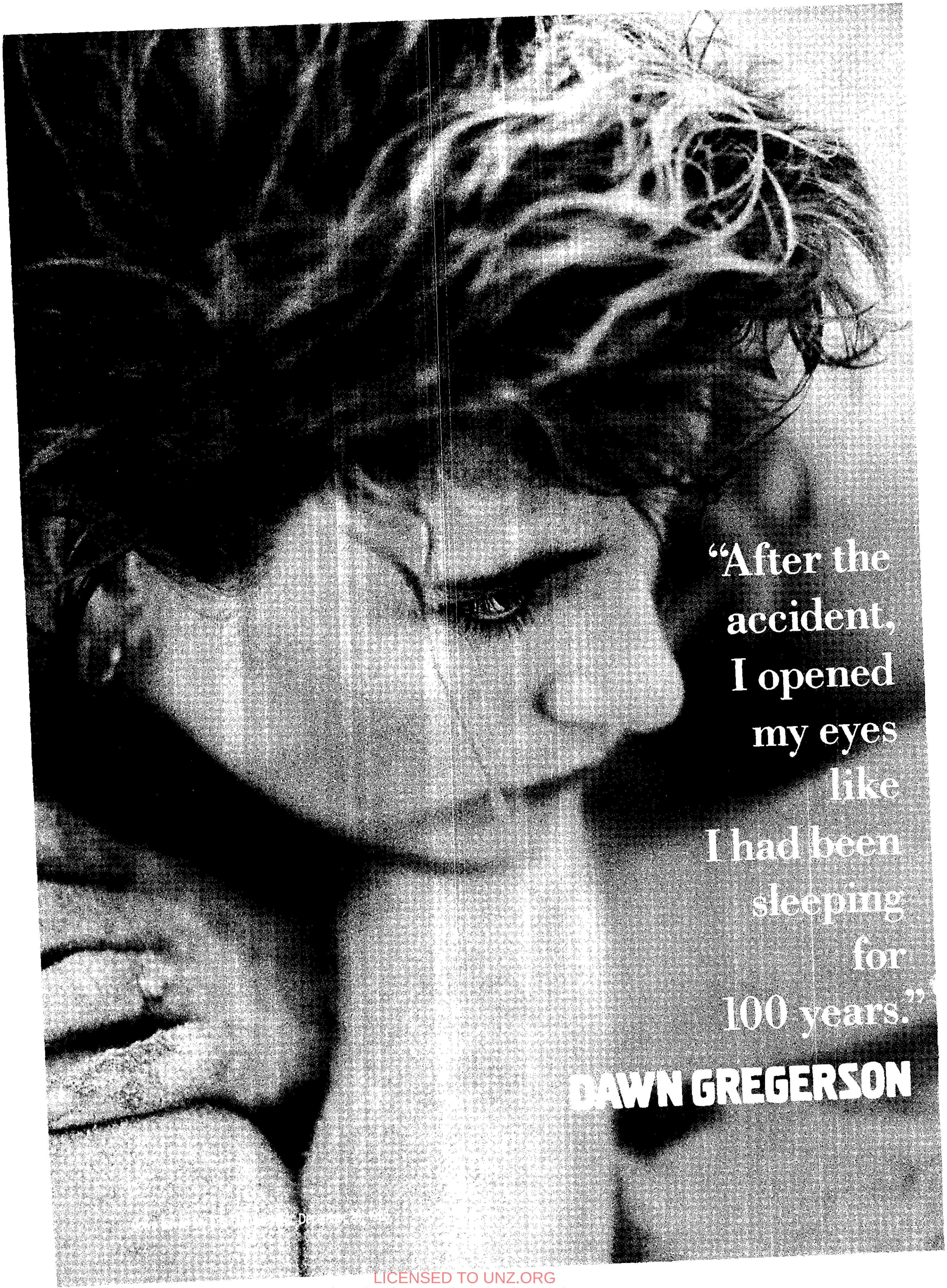
BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure and check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams, and features a mural filled with people resembling Bob, Carol, Ted, and Alice. **IVAN LINS,** a Brazilian pop singer who recently released an album titled "Awa Yio," begins a two-week engagement on March 17. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven-fifteen. Closed Mondays.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. The schedule, in part: **BO DIDDLEY, JR.,** on March 18; the **CHRIS CARTER** band on March 19; and **KEN PEPLOWSKI'S** quintet, featuring Byron Stripling, March 20-21. Music from nine. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other



Vince Giordano at Red Blazer Too



"After the
accident,
I opened
my eyes
like
I had been
sleeping
for
100 years."

DAWN GREGERSON

It comes so often without any warning.

"We were driving to Utah to go skiing," Dawn Gregerson begins. "We were laughing because on this desert highway, in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of the road, there was a man painting yellow lines on the road."

"I wouldn't want his job for the life of me," Gregerson recalls saying to her boyfriend, Jim Fagan, who was driving at the time.

Suddenly, a grey van, trying to pass on the inside lane, hit Gregerson's red Volvo 240 sedan on the rear passenger side.

"We never saw it coming. He came out of nowhere," Gregerson recalls. "One second we were joking, the next we were flying through space, tumbling and tumbling."

The impact sent the Volvo into a roll, flipping side over side, finally coming to rest on a dirt embankment farther down the highway.

Gregerson's thoughts through all this were simple and basic.

"Am I going to live?"

Each year there are 34 million traffic accidents in this country. An accident every second. An injury due to traffic accidents every six seconds. A death every twelve minutes. The rationale of it only happens to the other person just doesn't cut it anymore. 1 in 7 drivers will be in a traffic accident this year.

When Dawn Gregerson opened her eyes after the accident, she felt like she had been sleeping for a hundred years. Her body was banged up and sore. There was dirt and dust and sand everywhere.

An older couple, driving ahead, had seen everything in their rear view mirror.

"I think when they came back to help, they expected to find bodies all over the place," Gregerson recalls.

Each year, Volvo crash tests dozens of cars at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Since 1970, Volvo's Accident Investigation Team has analyzed over 15,000 accidents. Out of this commitment, out of this wealth of knowledge, Volvo has been able to further develop crumple zones that absorb impact energy, steel reinforced passenger cages, and now, on 700 and 900 series cars, a side impact protection system years ahead of meeting government requirements.

"I don't think the feeling ever goes away. The fear. That unexpected feeling of fear. Even now, there are times when I'm on the freeway and it returns. It just comes up on me.

"Like a year ago, I was on the freeway driving and I had that feeling again, the thought about being rear-ended, the sound, the feeling of flying. And the next thing I know, the guy in front of me runs into the car in front of him. I don't know if I saw it coming or it was just coincidence, but it really shook me up.

"I don't think people really see a car for what it is. It's something we use everyday, but it's something that can kill you. Or save you."

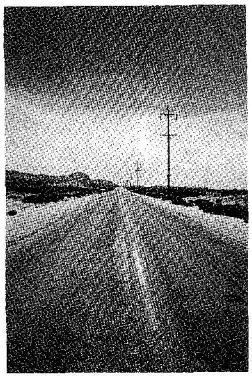
Each year, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety studies occupant death rates in thousands of accidents.* In its April 1991 study of 1984-88 models, the car with the lowest fatality rate was the Volvo 240 Wagon. Each year IIHS has been analyzing accident statistics, Volvo has been at the top or near the top in their respective model categories. No car manufacturer can guarantee you will survive an accident. No company can say you won't have an injury. But statistics show and crash tests demonstrate that some cars can offer more protection than others.

To sit and talk to Gregerson today, one would never know this young woman very nearly became another tragic statistic. With pictures of her family and friends scattered around her living room, she talks about her career in computers and her love of the beach.

One might even picture her in a sports car driving along the seashore, wind in her long blond hair.

"I admit after the accident I looked into something sportier. I even went into a few dealerships. But when I asked about safety features like reinforced roofs, they just looked at me. All they wanted to tell me about were things like CD players. In the end, I just couldn't do it. I got the same car in the same color I had before."

Drive safely. **VOLVO**



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*Study published April 1991 of 134 biggest selling 1984-88 model year cars during 1985-89 calendar years.

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

clubs sell their own belt buckles? March 17-22 belongs to **JUNIOR WALKER & THE ALL-STARS** and the **JUNIOR WELLS** blues band. **PHYLLIS HYMAN** begins work on March 24. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This big, airy folk-and-rock club tends to be the site of a lot of music-industry bashes. If you have trouble getting tickets to the early show, it's usually because some record company has bought the place out. The atmosphere here, as a result, can be a bit weird: the record-company types have to *have fun,* because their own artists are onstage, but they can't have too much fun, because their bosses are watching. The later shows, though they're not as well attended and though they tend to run late, are much looser in spirit. The velvet-voiced **PATTI AUSTIN,** who, in the seventies, made a name for herself singing jingles and background vocals, shows up for a three-night stand March 19-21. Shows at eight and eleven. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Next door, there's a bustling, garishly lit market. Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, however, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. Pianist **DONALD BROWN** leads an outfit through March 21. Pianist **JOHN HICKS,** who plays with Russell Malone and Christian McBride on March 22, has been remarkably productive in the past year or so. Aside from releasing his first solo album, Hicks can be heard on new albums by David Murray, Roy Hargrove, and Peter Leitch. **GARY BARTZ, GEORGE CABLES,** and **IRA COLEMAN** start up on March 23. Music from ten. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, currently, **EARTHA KITT.** Ms. Kitt has a staggering list of stage, TV, and recording credits. Most of her songs are tales of men and money, and she doesn't so much sing her lyrics as growl them, prowling the stage like a lioness protecting her cubs. Music Tuesdays through Saturdays at eight-forty-five and ten-forty-five. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

EAGLE TAVERN, 355 W. 14th St. (924-0275)—Nothing much goes on in the front room. In the back room, however, musicians gather for lively, talky, good-hearted jam sessions that rumble off toward the small hours. Eagle Tavern is far from fancy, but it's wonderfully human and one has a hard time leaving. **MARTIN CONNOLLY** and **MAUREEN GLYNN** appear on March 20. Sets at nine and ten-thirty on Friday and at eight on Saturdays.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. **BILL EVANS** is here through March 22, with a show titled "Post This & Neo That"; the **KENNY BARRON** quintet starts work on March 24. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An unpretentious second-floor jazz retreat where a bandleader was once heard saying, "I wanna introduce my drummer first on account of because he has to go put a quarter in the meter." **CHUCK WAYNE** leads a foursome on March 18, followed by **ROSEANNA VITRO'S** quartet (March 19), the Gully Low band (March 20), and the **RANDA MC NAMARA** quartet (March 21). Music from eight-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The musicians set up in the dining room, a clubby-looking space with leather banquettes and well-preserved collectibles: Sunday *Herald Tribune* covers, First World War posters, Hirschfeld cartoons. Up front, at the bar, you can keep your eye on the musicians, the conversationalists, and sidewalk life. Pianist **JOHN BUNCH** and bassist **FRANK TATE** work out together March 18-21, and pianist **CAROL BRITTO** begins a stint on March 25. Music from about nine-thirty.

LONE STAR ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—Spiffed-up theatre patrons walk by this club's façade—a Silver Eagle bus, with tires you can kick—and scratch their heads. Inside, big bearded guys with cowboy hats rub elbows at the bar while newcomers study the Texas memorabilia and, upstairs, the display of vintage Gibson guitars. **BLACK 47** will be here on March 17. **HUBERT SUMLIN** comes in on March 19. Show times vary. Dining.

MARQUEE, 547 W. 21st St. (929-3257)—A rock club that is one of the city's main venues for college-radio fare. The **CONNELLS** and **THIS PICTURE** claim March 18. **STIFF LITTLE FINGERS,** punk-era veterans from Belfast, will perform on March 19. The band started off as audacious punks with a political agenda, then ironed out the rough edges of their sound without sacrificing their activism. They called it quits in the early eighties, but have been recirculating in the past few years.

MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The legends of Hoboken are many. Some of the legends are true: Sinatra did grow up here; in certain parts of the town, the air does smell of Maxwell House coffee. Some of the legends are iffy: Was the first game of baseball really played here? Does former Hüsker Dü chieftain Bob Mould actually live in Hoboken? (John Sayles, maybe, but *Bob Mould*?) At Maxwell's—which will carry on even when its namesake, the Maxwell House factory, closes its doors later this year—you won't find all the answers, but you will find bands, bands, and bands. Sometimes you'll find as many as five a night. **YO LA TENGO** claims March 21, along with God Is My Co-Pilot. The former group keeps its fans guessing. As a followup to their last record, the reflective, acoustic, and lovely "Fakebook," the group has just released "May I Sing With Thee," in which they're back to their old frazzled-guitar-noise mode. Dining.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—It may look like a plain old steak house, and the photos on the walls may look like Sardi's leftovers, but in the back room you'll find swing bands, Dixieland combos, and couples sprung from the legacy of Fred and Ginger. Mondays belong to Howie Wyeth's ragtime trio, Tuesdays and Fridays to **VINCE GIORDANO AND THE NIGHTHAWKS,** Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band, and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and His Stompers. Show times vary.

RITZ, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This decaying theatre is the home of one of the city's biggest, oldest, and loudest rock clubs, which was formerly housed in a decaying ballroom in the East Village. The club features a broad stage, mobile-home-size speakers, plenty of room to shimmy, and, for the sedentary, a giant Big Brother video screen. On March 17 (at nine) you can catch **THE COMMITMENTS,** featuring **ROB STRONG.**

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Known for, among countless other things, a scene in "Manhattan" in which Woody Allen tries to teach his young son how to "score." Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret. **K. T. SULLIVAN** and **JEFF HARNAR** examine Noël Coward on March 22 at eight and ten-thirty. Dining and, of course, drinking.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest, this venerable club has many selling points: tropical drinks, Brazilian food, faux palm trees, a thatch-roofed bar. The live music is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. March 19 belongs to the **KLEZMATICS,** who blend traditional East-ern European Jewish music with up-to-the-minute jazz and minimalism. The group, which is based in New York, includes some fine soloists, and their music is full of fervor and mysticism. They give you some background on the genre, too, and translate some of the Yiddish lyrics. Calypso king **MIGHTY SPARROW** is in action on March 21. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—If you arrive late for a show at this celebrated shrine of jazz, you run the risk of being seated in the glass-enclosed terrace, which means you'll need a periscope to see the show. Otherwise, Sweet Basil is just the right environment for patrons—chiefly because it has a silence-or-else policy during shows. The **ART FARMER** quintet, which currently features the extraordinary tenor saxophonist **CLIFFORD JORDAN,** is holding forth here for a few weeks. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Down the staircase, this windowless, slice-of-pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia. The **ED BLACKWELL PROJECT** is here through March 22, and the **DONALD HARRISON** quintet begins work on March 24. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.** Music after nine-thirty.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **JANE JARVIS** and **MILT HINTON** are on duty March 16-21; **LARRY WILLIS, ANDY GONZALEZ,** and **JERRY GONZALEZ** get started on March 23. Music from eight.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

LA BOHÈME, in Los Angeles, is a soaring, Zeffirellian, chandeliered, statuaried, gyroscope-filled, post-neorealist combination French bistro, outdoor café, and happy-hour grazatorium of staggering American-pop-culture trendescence as reinterpreted by a Japanese firm with a chain of these doozies back home. Now they're trying to sell us back our own night life. Consider it payback for Tokyo Disneyland.

Serves us right. The club owners' timing couldn't be better. Clubhopping, dining, and hanging out, in both New York and L.A., have become so miniaturized that you can no longer call even the dinkiest dives in either city alternative spaces, because what *is* the alternative—sleep? No one else is investing big bucks in our fun. L.A. just keeps opening little coffee bars, as if the town were building a citywide E ride called Bleecker Street. Formerly known for measuring club longevity in weekends, its hippest Friday-night club is over two years old. New York is even worse. Lately, Diane Ladd's getting more Oscar nominations than any of us are getting invites to megarena openings, gran-caffè premières, or double-tiered-tavern débuts. Susanne Bartsch wisely abandoned Thursdays at the Copa and left no forwarding address.

So the high life is for the taking. The only problem is that no matter how big the fireplace, how deep the wishing well, how perfectly the staff learns to pronounce *mille-feuille,* how severely dressed the hostess, how high the trompe l'oeil rises into the rafters, or how hiply Charentonian the room design, you can't formulate fun. La Bohème is propelled by market research, inspirited by rote. And the food's not very good, either.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

RINGLING BROTHERS AND BARNUM & BAILEY CIRCUS—The hundred-and-twenty-second version of The Greatest Show on Earth. (Nassau Coliseum. March 17-24. For information about show times and tickets, call 1-516 794-9300.)

DIANE TORR—In "Ready Aye Ready." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. March 19-22 at 8. Through March 29.)

ART

PETER SAUL has always been a warrior-painter, on a heroic scale probably rivalled today only by Leon Golub. While Golub's pictorial infrastructures, however, are classical, and while his dry surfaces and subtly keyed colors, as well as the impassive rhetoric of his figures, evoke archetypes of the ancient world, the lurid style and manically Manichaean tone of Saul's action-packed allegories stem from the High Baroque, and were cultivated to the utmost in that psychedelic climate, of sixties San Francisco, which also spawned Robert Arneson's fantastically sculpted ceramics and the cartoons of R. Crumb.

Over the years, Saul's cast of adversaries has most typically comprised an inevitable if shifting assortment of government leaders, racist demons, warmongers, and fat cats in the news. Yet even at his most gonzo-satirical Saul has had the good grace to implicate himself as well. The nature of some of his own fantasies, for instance, may reasonably be deduced from the frequency of Angela Davis's highly graphic appearances in his seventies allegories, where, pneumatically afloat, she functions as a cosmic wet dream for priapically distorted members of the military-industrial complex.

We are relieved—and a little surprised—that neither Anita Hill nor any of her congressional inquisitors figure in Saul's sensational current show of "Heroic Themes" (Frumkin-Adams, 50 West 57th Street; through March 31). The anti-authoritarian Saul has this time set his apoplectic imagistic Furies on some of the more authoritative precedents in the canon of Western art. His huge new hallucinatory history paintings, self-implicating in the extreme, include "Raft of the Medusa," "The Alamo," "Custer's Last Stand," and "The Last Judgment," and each is an improbable wonder to behold.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

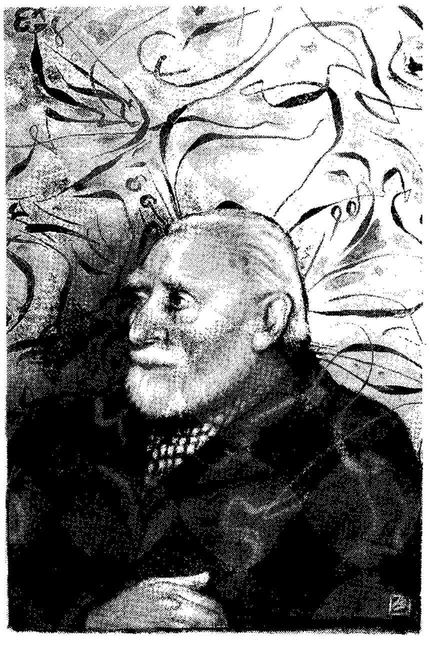
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Barbizon, in the Forest of Fontainebleau, was a meeting place and inspiration for several French landscape painters in the eighteen-fifties and sixties. A large sampling of works by these artists—Théodore Rousseau, Jean-François Millet, Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot, and others—is on view. Through May 10. . . . ¶ Fifty works by William Harnett (1848-92), the Irish-American painter who was the father of the trompe-l'oeil school. Through June 14. . . . ¶ The recent donation of the Perls collection—a hundred and sixty-three objects from the kingdom of Benin—has substantially redefined the museum's African holdings. This exhibition of the collection is a welcome relief from the rigid theatre of many of the museum's blockbusters: it enables viewers to make their own discoveries. . . . ¶ "American Rococo, 1750-1775." Furniture, silver, paintings, engravings, ceramics, and glass made in pre-Revolutionary America. Through May 17. . . . ¶ A group of Alpine landscape sketches and local genre scenes by John Singer Sargent, made during a youthful jaunt through the Bernese Oberland, in 1870. Through March 22. . . . ¶ The redesigned and renovated Arms and Armor galleries are open, and jammed to the hilt. The central Equestrian Court is still here, regally appointed, and it is now surrounded by eight new displays of Japanese, European, Islamic, and American weaponry and armor. . . . ¶ "The Lotus Transcendent." The Eilenberg collection, from which this show has been selected, is not particularly comprehensive nor focussed on grand masterpieces, but it does sparkle in many unexpected ways. For instance, it includes a group of bronze sculptures from Indonesia that many consider to be the finest privately assembled collection of such material in the world. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"The Paley Collection." While no museum in its right mind would turn down a bequest that included Picasso's "Boy Leading a Horse" (1905-06) or his "Nude with Joined Hands" (1906), or the handful of other Paley plums, the surprising over-all blandness of this group instills little more than a vague, mildly contemptuous sense of familiarity. Only the Picasso "Boy" and a few other paintings seem to transcend the pasteurization of Paley's taste. The larger, Post-Impressionist part of the collection does include some charming lesser works. Derain's 1933 painting, "The Rehearsal," of two actors on a murky stage, is one such oddball in this almost unrelievedly pretty assortment. And a group of small Maillol table bronzes, among the very few Paley sculptures, looked powerful. But the fatuous reception given the rest of this rather ordinary collection seems nothing but an endorsement of generic Fifth and Park Avenue taste. Through April 7. . . . ¶ "Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing," two hundred works by forty American and European artists. Through May 5. . . . ¶ A small show of recent photographs by Gay Block, of people who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. Through April 7. . . . ¶ On display on the ground floor are "Cross Check," "Power Play," "High Sticking," and "Hat Trick," four new chairs by the hockey-loving Frank Gehry. Through March 23. . . . ¶ Nearly a dozen black-and-white etchings by Richard Serra. Through March 24. . . . ¶ Twenty-one lamps from the sixties and seventies, including a Noguchi "Akari" lamp and a Castiglioni "Taraxacum" lamp. Alas, no lava is in sight. Through March 29. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until late spring.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A retrospective of photographs by Paul Strand. Through May 17. . . . ¶ The William Wegman show includes nearly two hundred paintings, drawings, photographs, and videotapes. Through April 19. . . . ¶ A large exhibition of paintings, drawings, etchings, and woodcuts by Terry Winters. Through May 10. . . . ¶ A new series of pastel drawings by Joan Mitchell. Starts March 19. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Seventy "Destructions," "Accumulations," and "Cachets" by the inimitable French Nouveau Réaliste Arman. Through April 26. . . . ¶ "The New Merengue," an installation in the Grand Lobby, by sculptor Houston Conwill, poet Estella Conwill Majozo, and architect Joseph De Pace. Through May 3. . . . ¶ "Contemporary Wood Sculpture" is a small show of works by Kenji Fujita, Jane Greengold, Louise Nevelson, and others. Through June 7. . . . ¶ "Biomorphicism and Organic Abstraction in Twentieth-Century Decorative Arts." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)



André Masson

AMERICAN ACADEMY AND INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS, Broadway at 155th St.—The Academy-Institute's annual painting-and-sculpture invitational. Artists on view include Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Jake Berthot, Tom Otterness, and Debra Birmingham. Through March 29. (Open daily, except Mondays, 1 to 4.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"The Cosmic Dancer." The tenth-century Hindu bronze of Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance, reigns as the centerpiece of this show of fifty sculptures from India and Southeast Asia. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St.—Joseph Beuys' early-seventies aluminum-glass-and-photo panel work titled "Arena—where would I have got if I had been intelligent!" Through June 21. . . . ¶ Six large paintings are the centerpiece of Brice Marden's show of works inspired by the Tang-dynasty poet Cold Mountain. Through May 31. . . . ¶ "Displacement," a whole floor of painted Conceptual and graphic wordplay by Lawrence Weiner. Through April 30. . . . ¶ On the roof, Dan Graham has created a fine urban park with glass walls, a floor of spongy asphalt tiles, and a squat glass cylinder at its center. The park is elevated above the roof as if it were afloat, and it is very pleasant to spend time up there, especially in the nearby coffee bar/video lounge. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—"Italian Art at the Close of the Quattrocento" is a show in two parts: the first is a group of eight works attributed to Antonio Pollaiuolo, including his small bronze "Hercules"; the second is a tour of paintings and sculptures in the collection, focussing on four panels by Piero della Francesca. Through March 29. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—Seventeenth-century Dutch drawings—of the landscape, genre, and figure variety—by Rembrandt, Ruisdael, Goltzius, and many others. Through April 26. . . . ¶ A small show of printed books and bindings produced in seventeenth-century Flanders and Holland. Through April 26. . . . ¶ Selections on view from the library's permanent collection include one of its three Gutenberg Bibles, Stevenson's autograph manuscript of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and the original scores of symphonies by Brahms and Mahler. Through April 26. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Broadway! 125 Years of Musical Theatre." A large assortment of objects—including paintings, posters, scripts, models, sheet music, and memorabilia—from nearly seventy-five productions that have bowed on the Great White Way. First seen in New York at the I.B.M. Gallery last summer. . . . ¶ "Harvey Wang's New York" is a show of photographic portraits of older workers in the city, accompanied by text panels with brief stories about the person in each work. Through March 29. . . . ¶ An exhibition of fifty paintings, watercolors, and lithographs by the Dutch artist Adrian Lubbers (1892-1954), whose fascination with New York City is reflected in his urban landscapes. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The hundred-and-sixty-seventh annual juried exhibition includes oil paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, pastels, watercolors, and an architectural drawing. Through May 10. (Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.—A show chronicling the design, construction, and urban context of New York's City Hall (1803-12). Forty-seven drawings, along with watercolors, prints, books, and a model, illumine the neoclassical edifice. Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 to 5, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, 11 to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"1+1+1," a series of recent sculptural projects by Alfredo Jaar, primarily in the form of large-scale light-box installations. Through April 19. . . . ¶ "The Big Nothing or Le Presque Rien," a group exhibition in which each artist has been asked to contemplate the notions of emptiness and materiality. Through April 19. . . . ¶ Jeffry Mitchell's installation, titled "My Spirit," consists of rubber, plaster, and latex tableaux of cartoon figures, toy creatures, and other kitschy icons. Through April 19. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—The Walt Whitman centenary is under way, and one of the more comprehensive celebratory exhibitions is "In Life or Death Forever": a hundred and fifty manuscripts, books, photographs, and letters culled from both the Berg and Oscar Lion collections. Starts March 20. . . . ¶ Recently acquired photographs are on display, including Morris Engel's panoramic views of New York City and Desiré Charnay's eighteen-fifties albumen prints of Mexico City. Through May 2. (Third Floor Gallery.) (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 7:30; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6.)

Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park—Ik-Joong Kang's "3 x 3," an installation that consists of thousands of three-inch-square paintings and collages. Through April 12. . . . ¶ "Art Beyond Sight," an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by visually impaired artists; museumgoers are permitted to touch the sculptures. Through March 29. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Short List—GEORGE GROSZ, Soufer, 1015 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through April 30); **GRACE HARTIGAN,** Anita Friedman, 980 Madison Ave., at 77th St. (through April 1); **JÖRG IMMENDORFF,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (through April 18); **JULES OLITSKI,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (through March 28); **MAN RAY** and **MERET OPPENHEIM,** Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through March 27); **THEODORE ROSZAK,** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (through April 11); **ESTEBAN VICENTE,** Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. (open Mondays, through March 28); **ROBERT WHITE,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through March 28); **CHRISTOPHER WILMARTH,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (open Mondays, through March 28); **PAUL WONNER,** Coe Kerr, 49 E. 82nd St. (through April 4).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

Vija Celmins—An extraordinary exhibition of paintings. The artist gained near-cult status in the seventies for her fastidious drawings of constellations and the ocean, which, though realistic, also had a meditative, abstract quality. Her work in the eighties elicited the question whether she could go beyond acts of exquisite repetition. The question is rendered irrelevant by these newest works. There are several of the night sky—blue-black grounds, painted and painted until the surfaces have achieved the luminescence of lacquer, interspersed with seas of dots of various sizes. The "stars," painted over but excavated through the many layers, radiate a pure white light that couldn't be brighter or more awe-inspiring. Most of these paintings are the size of shopping bags but there are a few that, though only somewhat larger, are so overwhelming they are almost blinding. There is also a compelling painting of what could be taken as cracks in a dried riverbed, rich with metaphors of age and decay. Through April 4. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

LOCKSTEP

Waking up with a start one night, Yvette Helin had a spooky thought. Who am I? What is this world? she wondered. Another time, standing on a street corner, she gazed upon a pedestrian-crossing sign featuring the usual abstract figures. Who are those people? she mused. Ms. Helin probes for the answers to these and other existential questions with her Pedestrians troupe. This ten-person ensemble, which she directs and choreographs, brings to life the symbolic humans on street signs as part comic gimmick, part social criticism. Wearing faceless black spherical heads and clad in geometric black cones and cylinders that Ms. Helin fashioned from Lycra-covered polyester mesh reinforced with Rigilene "boning" and nylon-rod hoops, the Pedestrians suggest a band of urban Martians. On March 25, the Pedestrians (funded by Franklin Furnace, a performance-art organization) will give two performances: at 11 A.M. *on the Supreme Court steps (60 Centre Street) and at 12:30* P.M. *on the Federal Hall steps (26 Wall Street).*

"I guess we're entertaining ourselves with the mundane. We're mirrors of ourselves in these costumes," says Ms. Helin. Toting black cutout plywood briefcases, shopping bags, and guns, the dehumanized everypersons execute a series of silent narratives in minimal, repetitive motions that eerily express the regimentation of modern life and our programmatic responses to it. Opening with a monotonous stair-mounting number, "The Corporate Ladder Climb," the Pedestrians proceed to "The Judge," a tableau on power; "The Gun Shooting," in which some turn coldly on others; and "The Ped Dance," a hypnotic, rocking shuffle. "The Grid Walk," a recurring combination of movements that recreate the experience of navigating Manhattan's streets, has Pedestrians rushing mindlessly about in squares, meeting at right angles without ever colliding. At one point, a Pedestrian falls and lies there like someone injured or homeless. The others go on striding deliberately over him, indifferent to his misfortune.

Robert Moskowitz—What has happened to this marvellous post-minimalist artist? His handsome 1990 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art featured strong paintings of simple forms that took on an architectural abstractness. But his new paintings, most of which have something to do with aggression—repressed or otherwise—simply lack power. A yellow painting of a seagull flying near the sun conjures Jonathan Livingston rather than Icarus and is about as penetrating as a Hallmark card. Through March 21. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—NICHOLAS AFRICANO and **MARIANNE EIGENHEER,** Holly Solomon, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through March 21); **GIOVANNI ANSELMO,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through April 4); **THEOPHILUS BROWN,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. (through April 3); **PAUL CADMUS,** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through April 18); **SAINT CLAIR CEMIN,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 4); **ARTHUR DOVE** and **WALTER ANDERSON,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St. (through April 30); **LAURA GRISI,** Haime, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 4), and Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through March 28); **MICHAEL GOLDBERG,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 18); **DONALD LIPSKI,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through April 11); **ANDRÉ MASSON,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through April 11); **LEIGH PALMER,** French, 24 W. 57th St. (through March 28); **ANNE POOR,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through April 4); **BRUCE PORTER,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (through April 2); **NINA POSNANSKY,** Gallery 84, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 21); **ARNULF RAINER,** Ulysses, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 28); **DOROTHEA ROCKBURNE,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through March 21); **LUDWIG SANDER,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through April 11).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Sylvie Fleury—This Swiss artist's first New York solo exhibition is the last word in material-girl chic. Her shopping-bag groups are organized into uptown and downtown sections and contain actual purchases—all in Fleury's size. Acquisition and denial are the subtext here. A shoe-shop installation and a rather Koonsian display of Christmas baskets containing cosmetics, Teddy bears (all bought as-is), and an Estée Lauder demonstration video help round out this spree. Fleury's work is terribly superficial and alarmingly profound, and, unchecked, it could feminize the world. Through March 21. (Postmasters, 80 Greene St.)

Hamish Fulton / Bruno Jakob—Drawings, photographic works, and paintings based on the artist's walks, including several taken, without sleep, during various solstices. The treasure of the show is a painting (rare for this artist) consisting of 54,530 watercolor dots on one wall, representing the number of steps taken on a hike up Mt. Hiei, in 1991. The chunky dots form patterns that gently pop across the wall in circuitous pathways. / Jakob's most recent effort is "Invisible Paintings," a series of works made, according to the list of materials, out of "energy" transferred to primed canvas. They go by such titles as "An Exposed Body on a Sheet of Paper" and "Clamps on Nipples." But the works fall far short of the results we'd expect from such transcendental materials and methods, and instead disintegrate into a dull, predictable exercise in commodity critique. Through March 21. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

Giuseppe Gallo—Adept and precious mood paintings with lots of prancing forms and red paint. The works on paper in the gallery's office are more appealing, because of their improvisatory character, although they may suffer from thoughts of Boetti and Clemente. Through March 28. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Richard Kalina—In his most recent works, Kalina has returned to the decorative. The paintings consist of grids of little squares of smeared black and white paint against grounds of collaged newsprint. Each square is a masterful little Abstract Expressionist painting. In the strongest works, the artist gets carried away with the painting and obliterates areas of the grid, overwhelming "paintings" with "paint." These works are intelligent and well conceived, yet there is a stiffness to them. In the end, they are less interesting than their subject—more the illustration of an idea than its embodiment. Through March 28. (Brown, 23 Watts St.)

Komar & Melamid—It took them a while, but now that the Soviet Union no longer exists these once dissident artists have finally discovered the Sears, Roebuck catalogue, and through it they have reached consumer paradise. This only mildly engaging installation offers simulated-brick doormats draped over sculpture stands, a crucifix made of acoustical ceiling tiles, and a "symphony" made by putting a tape recorder inside a Kenmore refrigerator/freezer. But despite the endless ironies about art and consumerism—or because of them—these slapdash works don't work. Through March 28. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Gary Lang—The best thing in this show of abstract works is from the artist's series of plaid paintings. Its ribbon-candy horizontals and verticals, with their intricate layering and frenetic surface rhythms, suggest the progressive urban life of the early sixties. The title, "Tickling Keys," surely refers to the obvious precedent for this work, "Broadway Boogie-Woogie," Mondrian's jazz-inspired celebration of New York. Lang is more deliberate in his use of color in two circular paintings that attempt to bring Zen to Delaunayan abstraction. These works are less successful because, oddly enough, despite the importance the artist has placed on color he is not a satisfying colorist. Through March 28. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

CHRIS MARTIN—This artist has learned well the formal lessons of the first generation of German Neo-Expressionists, particularly A. R. Penck and Sigmar Polke. These large, squarish canvases are handsome and quite powerful in their suggestions of ritual and landscape, though they perhaps depend too much on sheer size for their strength. Through March 28. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

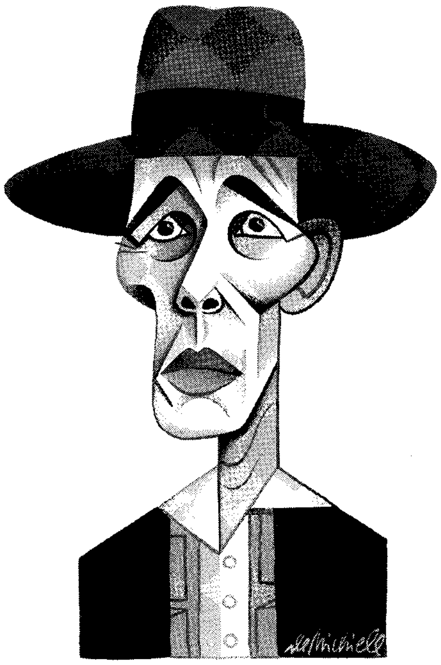
GERHARD MERZ—Three installation works assembled with various materials—stainless steel, concrete, paint on canvas. A quote from Wittgenstein does little to help these inaccessible abstractions speak. Through March 28. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

PETER SCHUYFF—When travelling, this artist spends his time painting small watercolors. Judging by this massive exhibition of two hundred works, either he is on the road a lot or he works extraordinarily fast. The emphasis is on basketweave, harlequin, and spirographic patterns of the sort one finds in his paintings, although there are a number of works in which the artist has, with neoplasticist delight, painted bars and circles over reproductions of academic figure drawings from the nineteenth century. Schuyff has a fine hand and a seductive color sense, and he certainly seems to enjoy himself. And while his paintings tend to be impersonally perfected, the watercolors are gestural, reassuringly flawed. The salon-style installation here is undeniably impressive, though it has not escaped that format's tendency to diminish the strength of individual works that in isolation can be jewel-like. Through April 4. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

"GEOMETRIC ABSTRACTION TO ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM"—An interesting examination of style and influence, consisting of pairs of works by seven different American artists—one geometric or lyrical, from the thirties, the other expressionistic, from the fifties. Curiously, while these artists remain primarily identified with the earlier styles, judging from the examples on view they tended to be better at the later one. Still, the relationships between the old and the new can be fascinating. The relatively unknown Josef Meierhans, who begins with a weak and shamelessly derivative Kandinskyesque abstraction, later shifts to a much more personal style. Charles Shaw is represented by a painted construction of the sort for which he achieved some prominence, yet his Abstract Expressionist canvas is far more deserving of attention. Ultimately, however, all the works, from whichever decade, tend toward the academic. Through March 28. (Synder, 588 Broadway.)

GROUP SHOW—Irony seems to be wearing thin as a serviceable aesthetic strategy for young artists. Ken Lum's slapstick mixed-media work about destitution is unedifying and smug, and Joan Wallace's "Mein Cunt" has lost sight of the art part of the equation. The third work here, by J. St. Bernard (presumably an alias), who is currently going by the name J. S. Bernard, is a shoo-in for the emperor's-new-clothes award. Through March 21. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

SHORT LIST—**DORIANA CHIARINI,** Ala, 560 Broadway (through April 11); **JIŘÍ GEORG DOKOUPIL,** Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through April 11); **WILL INSLEY,** Protetch, 560 Broadway (through April 4); **MARTIN KIPPENBERGER,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through April 4); **CLAUDIA MATZKO,** Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. (through April 11); **JOHN MC CRACKEN,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through April 4); **JOSEPH NECHVATAL,** Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through April 4); **LARI PITTMAN,** Gorney, 100 Greene St. (through March 28); **SCOTT RICHTER,** Marcus, 578 Broadway (through March 28); **JOEL SHAPIRO,** Cooper, 149 Wooster St. (through April 11); **JONATHAN TALBOT,** Gimpel-Weitzenhoffer, 415 West Broadway (through March 28); **AL TAYLOR,** Nolan, 560 Broadway (through April 11); **JOHN WILCOX,** Fawbush, 76 Grand St. (through April 2).



Joseph Beuys at the Dia Center

PHOTOGRAPHY

THE Lowinsky gallery is showing a group of salt prints by Édouard-Denis Baldus (575 Broadway; through March 28) which reinforces the position of eminence that this photographer is granted in many histories of the medium. Most of the photographs, we're told, are from a recently discovered copy of an album that was created on the occasion of an official visit that Queen Victoria and Prince Albert made to France, in 1855. Many pages in the album are devoted to photographs of the rail line between Boulogne and Paris, which had just been finished, and the completion of which was apparently the impetus for Baron Rothschild's assignment of this project to Baldus. Of all these grand photographs, one in particular—"Pont du Gard" (c. 1853)—is striking for how it seems to predict the future as well as for recording a landscape undergoing the enormous changes that came with industrialization. The triple-arched aqueduct occupying the central horizontal space in this photograph looks as much like a strip of 35-mm. film as like a bridge.

Unfortunately, this photograph—a perfect example of Baldus's famous "modernism"—has been returned to its owner. However, it has been reproduced, most recently in John Szarkowski's "Photography Until Now," and its absence should not deter anyone from visiting this show. It remains a generous exhibit of the work of a photographer who should be better known, one who could articulate architectural details as finely as an etching and capture expanses of sky or water with an emotional resonance usually credited only to painting.

WILLIAM WEGMAN—A retrospective of drawings, paintings, videos, and photographs. Through April 19. (Whitney Museum of American Art.)

"SOUVENIRS FROM JAPAN"—A display of late-nineteenth-century Japanese photographs, many of them exquisitely hand-colored, from the collection of one R. Schilling, a German forest engineer who worked in Japan at the beginning of the century. The works are so aesthetically pleasing that they could distract us from what they actually depict—be it Shinto shrines, women in Meiji-era Japan, or landscapes. Through March 22. (Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

SHORT LIST—**ÉDOUARD-DENIS BALDUS** and **SUZANNE OPTON,** Lowinsky, 575 Broadway (through March 28); **MANUEL ALVAREZ BRAVO** and **STEPHEN BRIGIDI,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through April 11); **FREDERIC BRENNER,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through April 19); **SARAH CHARLESWORTH,** Queens Museum of Art, Flushing Meadow Park (open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5; through April 12); **WILLIAM CHRISTENBERRY** and **VICTOR SCHRAGER,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 28); **DAVID DORAN** and **JANET KERR,** Camera Club, 853 Broadway, at 14th St. (open Mondays through Fridays, 1 to 5; through March 27); **PETER HUJAR,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through April 4); **RAY METZKER** and **WILLIAM EGGLESTON,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through April 4); **EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through April 26); **HANS NAMUTH,** Castelli, 578 Broadway (through March 28); **SHIKANOSUKE YAGAKI,** Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. (through April 25).

MUSIC

JAMES LEVINE has made a specialty of "Parsifal," and two comments he made about it in conversation have stuck in our mind. After several seasons of conducting the work at Bayreuth, he told us, the festival's director came to discuss what he might want to conduct next. "I would be happy to do 'Parsifal' indefinitely," Mr. Levine had replied. On another occasion: "When I'm in the middle of a 'Parsifal' performance, my idea of heaven is that it will never get over." He gets closer to heaven each year, then, those who don't care for his slow tempos might observe. We've noted before how Mr. Levine's Wagner divides opinion; and certainly there are things other conductors stress in Wagner that Mr. Levine does not. But sitting in the theatre for so many long evenings, we have rarely been dissatisfied. What this conductor *does* achieve is something that seems to us profoundly Wagnerian: a sense of immersion, of unrushed inevitability, of time suspended—indeed, of "endless melody," an ideal that quickly became a cliché in Wagner commentary but nevertheless embodies a key element of the composer's strange power. A melody that never ends, an opera that will never be over. . . .

When the Met's new "Parsifal" production opened last season, we thought it was rather drastically undermined by two principals who were not in harmony with their roles. The cast currently appearing (the first performance was March 12, and more or less the same group will continue in the opera for several more performances) is composed of German-speakers experienced in their parts and attuned to the exploration of this opera's mystery-landscape. Nothing in the theatre's current offerings draws us more.

AIG Issues Forum

Why reforming our liab
America is to succee

EXCESSIVE LIABILITY AWARDS MAKE IT TOUGH FOR U.S. COMPANIES TO COMPETE.

We are a compassionate society. We want to compensate those who have suffered.

But when our courts expand the traditional concepts of liability, causing defendants to pay excessive compensation, we add to the costs we all pay for goods and services. We encourage companies to stop research and development on new products. And we even make it harder for American companies to compete overseas.

PAYING A HIDDEN TAX.

In reality, the American system of liability has become the source of a hidden tax on our economy—a tax that can account for as much as 50% of the price paid for a product.

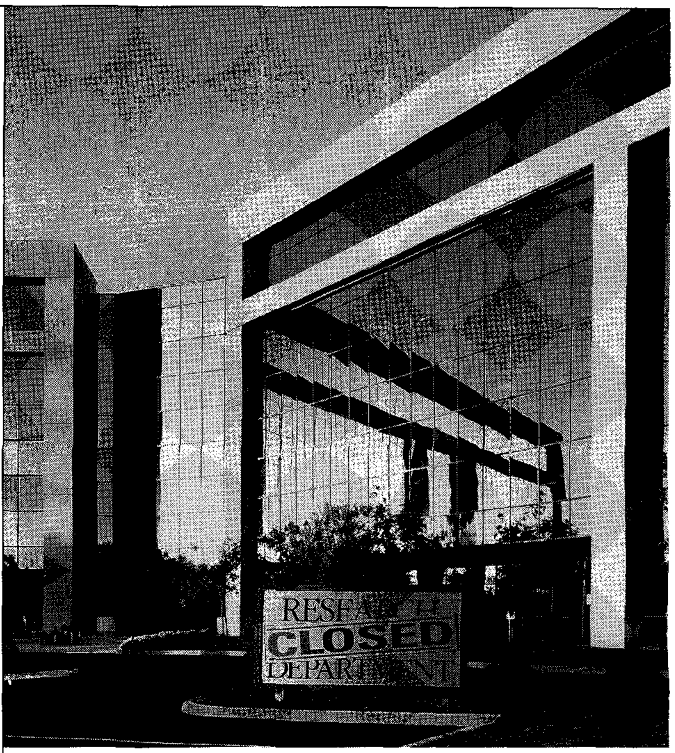
What's worse, it has been estimated that this hidden tax amounts to $80 billion a year—a sum equal to the combined profits of the nation's 200 largest corporations.

Our economic competitors' legal systems do not encourage litigation to the extent we do. Consider, for example, that there are 30 times more lawsuits per capita in the U.S. than in Japan.

Is it any wonder that America is having a tough time competing in overseas markets?

UNCERTAINTY STIFLES ENTERPRISE.

The unpredictability of our liability system is also enormously costly to American competitiveness. For example, in a recent survey of CEOs, the Conference Board found that worry about potential liability lawsuits caused 47% of firms surveyed to discontinue one or more product lines. What's more, 25% stopped certain product research and development, and 39% decided against coming out with a new product. Meanwhile, our overseas competitors continue to research and develop new products at an ever-increasing pace.



ARE WE CONTROLLING RISKS OR INCREASING THEM?

When we give a drunk driver the right to sue an automaker or highway engineer for a million dollars after a crash, are we controlling risk?

Or just encouraging risky and careless behavior?

If you are a manufacturer, you can be sued even if your product has state-of-the-art safety features. Even if your customer misused it against your instructions. Even if the risks of misuse were obvious.

When fear of lawsuits causes physicians to limit

ty system is essential if
n overseas markets.

services to patients—or worse, to abandon their practice altogether—lack of adequate treatment means greater risks for everyone.

Is this controlling risk or increasing it?

It's an unhealthy and dangerous situation that needs correcting.

WE MUST REFORM OUR "DEEP POCKETS" APPROACH TO LIABILITY.

Specifically, we need to change our approach and base liability suits on fault.

Our current system often encourages the frivolous suing of those with the ability to pay—in other words, those with "deep pockets." But does it make sense to hold such parties entirely liable, even if they were only minimally at fault?

A MORE RATIONAL APPROACH.

Those who suffer economic losses because of another's negligence should be fairly reimbursed. No one could argue with this principle. There should also be just compensation for pain and suffering resulting from real and severe injuries.

But can we afford to continue a system that encourages litigation and financial judgments bearing little direct relationship to fault or to the actual cost of injuries suffered?

Clearly, a better approach is needed.

CONGRESS HAS A ROLE.

Legislation providing a uniform product liability standard would allow American companies to compete without the burdens of excessive liability risks. And this would unclog the courts and put American business in a stronger position as barriers to international trade and investment fall.

There is proposed legislation before Congress dealing with these issues. A solution to the liability crisis is vital to American competitiveness, and Congress can play a role in restoring the right balance.

SO DO THE COURTS.

When all is said and done, our courts are the interpreters of our laws and our values. It's our values as a society that count, especially as reflected in the courts and individual jury decisions.

Together our legislative and judicial branches must recognize the damage being done to American competitiveness from the current liability system. And help America restore the proper balance.

WHY IS AIG RUNNING ADS LIKE THIS?

AIG (American International Group) is the largest underwriter of commercial and industrial insurance in America, and the leading U.S.-based international insurance organization.

Since we deal every day with issues affecting the future of the world economy, it's understandable that we champion reform designed to strengthen the competitive stance of American business in global markets.

Perhaps you'll want to keep the ball rolling by contacting your elected officials—judges and legislators—with your own views.

Or if you prefer, write Mr. M.R. Greenberg, Chairman, AIG, 70 Pine Street, New York, NY 10270.

AIG World leaders in insurance and financial services.

MUSIC—Cont'd

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**parsifal,** with Waltraud Meier, Siegfried Jerusalem, Bernd Weikl, Franz Mazura, and Kurt Moll; conducted by James Levine. (March 16, March 20, and March 24, all at 6:30.). . . **rigoletto,** with Ruth Ann Swenson, Richard Leech, and Giorgio Lormi; Nello Santi. (March 17 at 8.). . . With Ruth Ann Swenson, Richard Leech, and Louis Quilico; Nello Santi. (March 21 and March 25 at 8.). . . **le nozze di figaro,** with Patricia Shuman, Dawn Upshaw, Frederica von Stade, Thomas Hampson, and Ferruccio Furlanetto; James Levine. (March 18 at 8 and March 21 at 1:30.). . . **don carlo,** with Aprile Millo, Nina Terentieva, Bruno Beccaria, Vladimir Chernov, and Samuel Ramey; Samuel Cristler. (March 19 at 7.). . . With a soprano to be announced, Nina Terentieva, Michael Sylvester, Vladimir Chernov, and Samuel Ramey; James Levine. (March 23 at 7.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

St. Petersburg National Opera—This Russian troupe was founded in 1918, on the heels of the Bolshevik revolution, as the Maly Opera and Ballet Theatre, and later became known as the Leningrad National Opera (a name that held until this January). In this three-week visit, they'll present three classic Russian operas, all based on stories by Pushkin and all presented with English supertitles. Mussorgsky's **boris godunov** (March 17 at 7:30, and March 21 at 1:30 and 8.). . . ¶ Rimsky-Korsakov's **le coq d'or** (March 18 at 8, and March 22 at 1:30 and 7:30.). . . ¶ Tchaikovsky's **pique dame** (March 19-20 and March 24-25 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through April 5.)

"Atys"—The Paris Opéra-Comique production of Lully's tragic masterpiece from 1676, to a libretto by Philippe Quinault; with Les Arts Florissants, the Ris et Danceries dance ensemble, and a cast that includes sopranos Monique Zanetti and Ann Monoyios (alternating as the water nymph Sangaride) and tenor Howard Crook (in the title role); conducted by William Christie, with stage direction by Jean-Marie Villegier. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. March 18 and March 20-21 at 7, and March 22 at 2.). . . **note:** On March 19 at 6 Andrew Porter will join Messrs. Christie and Villegier to discuss the modern staging of French Baroque opera. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160.)

Center for Contemporary Opera—Presenting a semi-staged production, with orchestra, of "Tales of Malamud," which comprises two one-act operas based on stories by Bernard Malamud. The first, "Idiots First," was conceived and sketched by Marc Blitzstein, with the composition completed by Leonard Lehrman; the second, "Karla," is entirely Mr. Lehrman's work. Richard Marshall conducts. (New York University Theatre, 35 W. 4th St. March 19 at 8 and March 21 at 3. For information about tickets, call 279-4200.)

"Amadis"—Lully's 1684 *tragédie lyrique,* fully staged (in English) and set in the American Wild West. Presented by the Measured Breaths Theatre Company. (Gene Frankel Theatre, 24 Bond St. March 20-22 at 8. For information about tickets, call 334-8402. Through April 5.)

"Thamos, König in Ägypten"—Baird Hastings conducts the Mozart Festival Orchestra and a chorus in Mozart's incidental music for Baron Gebler's allegorical Masonic play. (First Presbyterian Church, Fifth Ave. at 12th St. March 22 at 4:30. No tickets necessary.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—André Previn conducts Britten's "Sinfonia da Requiem," Prokofiev's Seventh Symphony, and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Jean-Philippe Collard). (Avery Fisher Hall. March 25 at 8. Through March 31.)

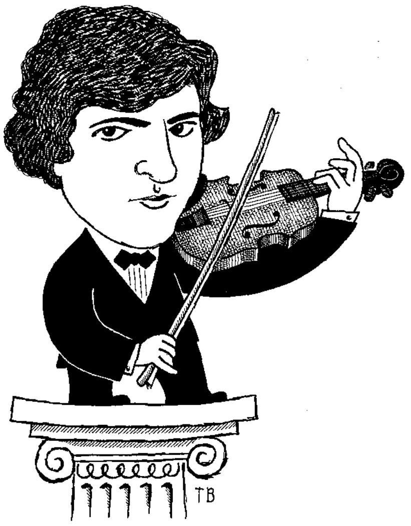
Cleveland Orchestra—Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts Shostakovich's Symphony No. 8 and Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 (with Joshua Bell). (Carnegie Hall. March 16 at 8.)

Ascension Music—Dennis Keene directs Bach's "St. John Passion." (Church of the Ascension, Fifth Ave. at 10th St. 254-8553. March 18 at 8.)

London Philharmonic Orchestra—Franz Welser-Moest conducting. March 18 at 8: Schubert's "Rosamunde" Overture, Brahms' Symphony No. 2, and Mendelssohn's E-Minor Violin Concerto (with Young Uck Kim). (Avery Fisher Hall.). . . ¶ March 19 at 8: Beethoven's Symphonies No. 5 and No. 6. (Carnegie Hall.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Pinchas Zukerman conducts works by two of the Bach sons—Johann Christian and Carl Phillipp Emmanuel—as well as Vivaldi's "Four Seasons," in which he doubles as violin soloist. (92nd Street Y. March 19 and March 21 at 8.)

Philharmonia Virtuosi—Richard Kapp leads a program that includes Bizet's Symphony in C and guitar concertos by Joaquín Rodrigo (his "Concierto de Aranjuez") and Jean Françaix, both of which will feature Eliot Fisk. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 21 at 7.)



Maxim Vengerov, with the Moscow Philharmonic

Orchestra of St. Luke's—Robert Craft conducts Stravinsky's "Perséphone" and Debussy's "Chansons de Bilitis" (with the recitations in both delivered by actress Irène Jacob), as well as Stravinsky's rarely performed cantata "Zvezdoliki" and Beethoven's First Symphony. The forces are enlarged by the Gregg Smith Singers, the Newark Boys Choir, and tenor John Aler. (Alice Tully Hall. March 21 at 8.)

Moscow Philharmonic—March 21 at 8: Mark Ermler conducts Rimsky-Korsakov's overture to "The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh," excerpts from Tchaikovsky's "Nutcracker," and Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1 (featuring Maxim Vengerov). (Carnegie Hall.). . . ¶ March 22 at 3: Jansug Kakhidze conducts Weber's "Oberon" Overture, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10, and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Yefim Bronfman). (Avery Fisher Hall. March 22 at 3.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Leon Botstein conducts late nineteenth-century works: Dvořák's symphonic poem "A Hero's Song," the New York première of Hans Rott's Symphony in E Major, and the Piano Concerto No. 2 by Eugène d'Albert (with Todd Crow as soloist). (Carnegie Hall. March 22 at 3.)

Central City Chorus—Charles Pilling directs the chorus and an orchestra in the first New York performance of Britten's "The Company of Heaven," which, though composed in 1937, was published only recently. This performance will feature soprano Nancy Bergman, tenor Patrick Romano, and reciters Barbara Feldon and Richard Evans Spalding. Also on the program is Vaughan Williams' "Benedicite." (Central Presbyterian Church, Park Ave. at 64th St. March 22 at 7. Admission by contribution.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—Gary Miller directs an all-star, all-Bernstein concert, with Betty Comden and Adolph Green presiding, and a guest roster that includes Joyce Castle, Kevin Gray, Constance Hauman, Judy Kaye, Phyllis Newman, Kurt Ollman, and Ron Raines. (Carnegie Hall. March 22 at 8.)

Tchaikovsky Chamber Orchestra—Lazar Gosman leads the orchestra and various soloists in music by Mozart and Schnittke, as well as two works by Shostakovich: an orchestral transcription of his Eighth String Quartet, and his First Piano Concerto (featuring Ignat Solzhenitsyn, son of the writer). (Alice Tully Hall. March 24 at 8.)

St. Ignatius Loyola Choir—Thomas Tallis's motet "Spem in Alium" is legendary among aficionados of Renaissance choral music for the extravagant forces it demands: forty separate voice parts organized into eight distinct choirs. Kent Tritle directs it twice, once in the reigning modern edition and once in a new version (with English words) derived from sources he recently uncovered in British archives. Other a-cappella works on the program include medieval pieces by Perotin and Hildegard von Bingen, Gregorio Allegri's celebrated "Miserere" (a favorite of Mozart's), and several spanking new arrangements of spirituals. (Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, Park Ave. at 84th St. 439-8044. March 25 at 8.)

RECITALS

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Oliver Knussen conducts Stefan Wolpe's "Piece in Three Parts" for Piano and Sixteen Instruments (featuring pianist Peter Serkin), in a concert that also includes music by Mozart, Beethoven (his "Grosse Fuge"), Henri Lazarof, and Mr. Knussen. (Alice Tully Hall. March 17 at 7:30.)

Emma Johnson—Clarinettist, performing works by Schumann, Brahms, Poulenc, Messiaen, and Gerald Finzi, as well as a suite written for her by John Dankworth; assisted by pianist Gordon Back. Presented by Young Concert Artists. (92nd Street Y. March 17 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Three dancers join the chamber musicians in a performance of Bruce Adolphe's "Sharéhi," in a program that also includes works by Beethoven and Ibert. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 17 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Performing three trios by Mozart. (Alice Tully Hall. March 18 at 8.)

Maria Bachmann—The violinist performs compositions and arrangements by Fritz Kreisler, as well as works by Grieg and Sebastian Currier; assisted by pianist Jon Klibonoff. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. March 18 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Presenting piano quartets—both in E-Flat Major—by Mozart and Schumann, as well as Schumann's "Märchenbilder" and piano works by Frederic Rzewski. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 19 at 7:30 and March 22 at 4.)

Oleg Volkov—The pianist performs sonatas by Haydn and Shostakovich, preludes by Scriabin and Rachmaninoff, Beethoven's "Twelve Variations on a Russian Dance" (WoO 71), and Prokofiev's "Sarcasms." (Alice Tully Hall. March 19 at 8.)

American Festival of Microtonal Music—For people who appreciate the little things in life. Numerous performers gather for two different programs to explore works by Harry Partch, Johnny Reinhard, Toru Takemitsu, Iannis Xenakis, and Bernd Alois Zimmermann, all of which employ smaller divisions of the octave than audiences are accustomed to hearing. (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University. Enter at Broadway and 116th St. March 19-20 at 8. Tickets at the door on the nights of the concerts.)

Bruce Brubaker—Though Wagner's output was overwhelmingly operatic, he did produce occasional pieces in other genres, including a small and unloved corpus of piano music. Mr. Brubaker performs two of Wagner's piano works: the "Ankunft bei den schwartzen Schwänen" (or "Arrival at the Black Swans," a sort of tourist's memento from a trip to Paris in 1861) and an "Albumblatt für Frau Betty Schott" (a bagatelle, dedicated to his publisher's wife, which includes musical references to "Die Meistersinger"). The program is completed by more standard fare: sonatas by Mozart (in E-Flat, K. 282) and Beethoven (the "Tempest"), and a bit of Chopin. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 20 at 7.)

Marthe Keller and Blanche d'Harcourt—In proper musical parlance, "melodrama" refers not to a work of overt histrionics but rather to a composition in which text is spoken over the background of a musical score. The genre reached a high point of popularity in nineteenth-century Germany, with many leading composers contributing to the repertoire. Actress Marthe Keller and pianist Blanche d'Harcourt offer semi-staged renderings of eight Romantic melodramas (all in German) with music by, among others, Schubert, Schumann, Strauss, and—surprise!—Friedrich Nietzsche, with Ms. d'Harcourt sprinkling solo-piano morsels among them. (Weill Recital Hall. March 20 at 8.)

Music from Japan—As if suggesting that chilly commercial relations between the United States and Japan need not extend to the arts, composer-performers from both nations join to perform traditional and contemporary works. (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. March 21 at 5.). . . **note:** On March 22 at 2, the Asia Society will host a symposium on multicultural music, which will include musical demonstrations by the preceding evening's performers.

Bion Tsang—The young cellist, whose numerous honors include the bronze medal in the Ninth International Tchaikovsky Competition, offers a program that includes Brahms' F-Major Sonata, Hindemith's Variations on "A Frog He Went A-Courting," and a new work by Ezra Laderman; with pianist Richard Bishop. (Alice Tully Hall. March 22 at 2:30.)

North/South Consonance—To celebrate the centennial of the birth of Darius Milhaud, Max Lifchitz conducts that composer's classic, jazz-flavored ballet score from 1923, "La Création du Monde." The program also includes recent works by Gilberto Mendes, Jeffrey Hass, Jody Rockmaker, and Eric Sawyer. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. March 22 at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

An die Musik—At Merkin Concert Hall. March 22 at 4: The chamber group plays music by Haydn, Mozart, Brahms, and Oliver Knussen. . . . ¶ March 24 at 6: Works by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Michael Roll—In his New York recital début, the British pianist performs works by Mozart, Schubert, and Schumann (his C-Major Fantasie, Op. 17). (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. March 22 at 5.)

Lark String Quartet—In the first concert for the general public to be held in Lincoln Center's newest performance space, the ensemble plays its namesake piece (Haydn's "Lark" Quartet) as well as Shostakovich's Quartet No. 8. Samuel Sanders joins the foursome for Schumann's Piano Quintet. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., Plaza Level. March 23 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

Maurizio Pollini—The pianist performs two sonatas by Beethoven (No. 4, Op. 7, and No. 30, Op. 109), Book Two of Debussy's Études, and Nono's "Sofferte onde serene" (for piano and tape). (Carnegie Hall. March 24 at 8.)

Simon Preston—The British organist performs works by Bach, Reger, and Ives, as well as transcriptions of pieces by Wagner and John Philip Sousa (a composer we imagine he rarely programmed in the course of his quotidian duties during the nineteen-eighties, when he served as organist and master of the choristers at Westminster Abbey). (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. March 25 at 8. Admission by contribution.)

Santiago Rodriguez—The pianist kicks off his three-concert survey of Rachmaninoff's major keyboard compositions by playing the Sonata No. 1, the Ten Preludes (Op. 23), and the "Variations on a Theme by Corelli." (92nd Street Y. March 25 at 8.)

Tokyo String Quartet—An all-Mozart program: two quartets and (with violist Pinchas Zukerman) two quintets. (Alice Tully Hall. March 25 at 8.)

Isabelle Moretti—Harpist, performing solo and chamber works, assisted by violinist Charles Libove and pianist Nina Lugovoy. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 25 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK
PERSONAL APPEARANCES

U2—It's a couple of weeks into the "Achtung Baby" juggernaut, and U2, packing some of their best work, will be firing up the Meadowlands Arena and the Garden next. Bono, Adam, Larry, and the Edge have played together for over a decade now, and all their songs, from "I Will Follow" through "Mysterious Ways," have maintained a convincing, almost spiritual harmony with one another. Driven by the Edge's brilliant guitar work, the band's evocative, subterranean sound is one that is practically landscaped for an arena. (Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. March 18 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Madison Square Garden. 465-6500. March 20 at 8.)

David Byrne and Richard Thompson—It has taken most of George Bush's first term as President for David Byrne to finally get around to writing a new clutch of engaging rock-and-roll songs. (Byrne recently announced that the Talking Heads record "Naked," released in 1988, was the band's final album.) He's been performing the songs from his new album, "Uh-Oh," with an acoustic guitar and a versatile little rhythm-section boom box, and it's an exciting return to form. "The monster in the mirror" (a line from a new tune called "A Walk in the Dark") is back—the herky-jerky persona that is part Elvis and part Norman Bates. On "Uh-Oh," this funny and scary self is brightly colored with strong melodies and a lilting African-Latin pop sound; onstage, he's riveting. As for Richard Thompson, the twenty-five-year folk-rock veteran who will also present an acoustic set in this benefit show: if he were a listing in a thesaurus, the synonyms would be "criminally underappreciated," "attracts adoring cult audience," and "the greatest unknown talent in rock." His record company, Capitol, has been trying to do for him what it recently did for Bonnie Raitt, and they're on the right track. His guitar playing, both electric and acoustic, is intense and expressive, and he is a delightful live entertainer. All in all, a killer show. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. March 24 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 1-718 834-8794.)

U2

Allman Brothers Band—Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. March 17-18 and March 20-22 at 8.

Michael Weiss Quintet—Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 18 at 8.

Harry Connick, Jr., and His Orchestra—Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6500. March 19-21 and March 23-24 at 8. Through April 7.

Andrew Dice Clay—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. March 19-21 at 8.

"Not Just Jazz"—Presenting the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra, featuring Lew Tabackin, and the Amina Claudine Myers group. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. March 20 at 8.)

Nitzer Ebb—Academy Theatre, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. March 21 at 8.

"Lyrics and Lyricists"—The third of five programs this season devoted to Jerome Kern and his many lyricists. With Vince Giordano, Carol Woods, Paula Laurence, and others. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. March 22 at 2:30 and 8 and March 23 at 2 and 8.)

Bryan Adams—Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. March 25 at 7:30.

"Cabariety"—March 17-22: Craig Carnelia, Sally Mayes, Nancy Timpanaro, Todd Stockman, Thos Shipley, and Bob Bendorff. . . . ¶ March 24-29: John Wallowitch & Bertram Ross, Helen Baldassare, Phillip Officer, Merle Louise, Darcy Thompson, and Dick Gallagher. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 688-7253. Shows Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 2 and 8; and Sundays at 3 and 7.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Rangers—Vs. the Montreal Canadiens, March 16 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, March 18 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Devils, March 22 at 1:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, March 25 at 7:30.

Islanders—Away until March 26.

Devils—Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, March 19 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, March 21 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the San Jose Sharks, March 24 at 7:35.

Knicks—Vs. the Milwaukee Bucks, March 19. . . . ¶ Vs. the Miami Heat, March 21. . . . ¶ Vs. the Orlando Magic, March 24. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Chicago Bulls, March 17. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Bullets, March 20. . . . ¶ Vs. the Charlotte Hornets, March 23. . . . ¶ Vs. the Boston Celtics, March 25. (Game time, 7:30.)

Entrenamiento de Primavera—Here we are again in baseball's Edenic month of childlike play. Recent seasons have seen Grapefruit League pennant dreams repeatedly frustrated by uncoöperative reality, and this one is no exception: Doc Gooden is throwing heat again, but his shoulder will need time; Pascual and Melido Pérez, the Merengue Kings, will not be playing together in the big show; and Darryl just can't leave the Mets alone. Still, with guys like Torborg, Saberhagen, and Bonilla in the picture, Spring Training gives New Yorkers plenty to dream about. And, in a season that finds Willie Randolph in Shea and Don Zimmer back in Fenway, anything can happen.

(The Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

What You Eat—A daylong program of food-related films and videos, which includes short films about pickles, garlic, dried fish, peanut butter and jelly, and chicken soup; feature-length films about M.F.K. Fisher, eating disorders, and cannibalism; and an animated film concerning a breed of hard-to-tame potatoes. (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. March 21, starting at 11 A.M. For more information, call 529-1955.)

Hat Trick—The people at the Empire State Building have installed a show of hats in their lobby. The main attraction is a group of hats made by children who live in New York City, which visitors can "try on" by looking in a special mirror. (Fifth Ave. at 34th St. Open daily, 10 to 6.)

Readings—March 16 at 8: Cristina Garcia and Pam Houston read from their own prose. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. For tickets, call 645-0905.). . . ¶ March 17 at 7: Stephen Dobyns and Louise Glück read from their own poetry. (French Institute-Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Tickets at the door.). . . ¶ March 18 at 6:30: Gloria Foster, Charles Keating, and Essene R read from the works of Sherley Anne Williams, Charles Johnson, and Xam Wilson Cartier. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.). . . ¶ March 19 at 8: Henry Alford, Roy Blount, Jr., Jim Collins, Ann Hodgman, Paul Rudnick, and others read from their own humor writing. (Universalist Church, 160 Central Park W., at 76th St. For tickets, call 875-4128.). . . ¶ March 22 at 4: Elizabeth Macklin and Cynthia Zarin read from their own poetry. (Educational Alliance, 197 East Broadway. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ March 23 at 8:15: Marianne Boruch, Nancy Esposito, and Eamon Grennan read from their own poetry. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.). . . ¶ March 24 at 6: Nicholas Christopher and Edward Hirsch read from their own poetry. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Memorandum—Spring begins on March 20 at 3:48 A.M.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)

Theatre 1: Through March 19: "Black Robe" (directed by Bruce Beresford), with Lothaire Bluteau. From March 20: "Edward II" (Derek Jarman).

Theatre 2: Through March 17: "Amazon" (Mika Kaurismaki), with Robert Davi, Rae Dawn Chong, and Kari Väänänen. From March 18: "American Dream" (†).

Theatre 3: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington, Sarita Choudhury, Roshan Seth, and Charles Dutton.

Theatre 4: "Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, Rupert Graves, Giovanni Guidelli, Barbara Jefford, and Helen Mirren.

Theatre 5: "Until the End of the World" (Wim Wenders), with William Hurt.

Theatre 6: Through March 21: "My Own Private Idaho" (Gus Van Sant), with River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves. From March 22: "Proof" (Jocelyn Moorhouse), with Hugo Weaving, Genevieve Picot, and Russell Crowe.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)

March 16: Theatre closed.

March 17-19: "Hecate" (1982, Daniel Schmid), with Bernard Giraudeau and Lauren Hutton; and "Shadow of Angels" (1976, Schmid), with Ingrid Caven and Rainer Werner Fassbinder.

March 20-22: (Separate admissions) "The Puerto Rican Mambo (Not a Musical)" (Ben Model), with Luis Caballero; "Finzan" (1990, Cheik Oumar Sissoko; in Bambara); and "Salmonberries" (Percy Adlon, in English and German).

March 23: Theatre closed.

From March 24: (Separate admissions) "The Puerto Rican Mambo (Not a Musical)"; "Finzan"; and "The Guardian and His Poet" (1978, Adlon; in German), with Rolf Illig and Horst Raspe.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Theatre 2: Through March 19: To be announced. From March 20: "Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.

Theatre 3: "This Is My Life" (†).

Loews Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)

Theatre 1: "JFK" (†).

Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (†).

Theatre 3: Through March 19: "Wayne's World" (†). From March 20: "Shadows and Fog" (Woody Allen).

Theatre 4: "The Mambo Kings" (Arne Glimcher), with Armand Assante, Antonio Banderas, and Cathy Moriarty.

Theatre 5: "Bugsy" (†).

Theatre 6: "Gladiator" (Rowdy Herrington), with James Marshall, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Brian Dennehy, Robert Loggia, and Ossie Davis.

Theatre 7: "Memoirs of an Invisible Man" (†).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)

Theatre 1: "Kafka" (Steven Soderbergh), with Jeremy Irons.

Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Adventures of the Great Mouse Detective," a Disney animated film; and (evenings only) "Medicine Man"(†).

Theatre 3: "Daughters of the Dust" (1991, Julie Dash).

Theatre 4: Through March 19: "Blame It on the Bellboy" (Mark Herman). From March 20: "Noises Off" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Michael Caine, Carol Burnett, Julie Hagerty, John Ritter, Nicollette Sheridan, Christopher Reeve, Marilu Henner, Mark Linn-Baker, and Denholm Elliott.

Theatre 5: "Hear My Song" (†).

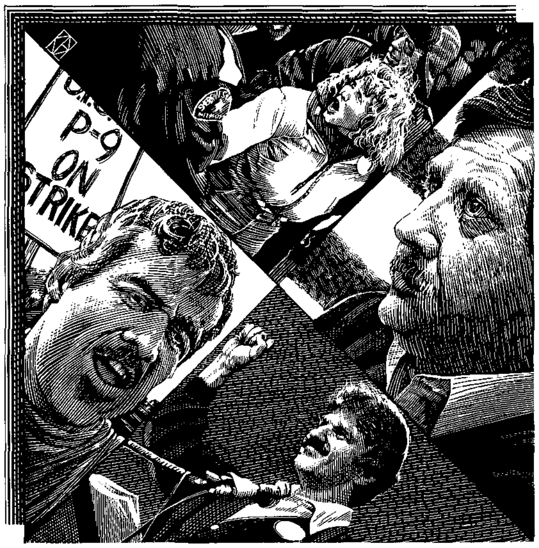
Theatre 6: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).

Theatre 7: "Shakes the Clown" (Bobcat Goldthwait), with Goldthwait.

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 20.



At Angelika Film Center, "American Dream"

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)

Theatre 1: "Hook" (Steven Spielberg), with Robin Williams, Dustin Hoffman, Julia Roberts, and Bob Hoskins.

Theatre 2: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Theatre 3: "The Prince of Tides" (†).

Theatre 4: Through March 19: "Highway to Hell" (Ate de Jong), with Patrick Bergin. From March 20: "Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.

Theatre 5: "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere and Kim Basinger.

Theatre 6: "Article 99" (Howard Deutch), with Ray Liotta and Kiefer Sutherland.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Grand Canyon" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)

Theatre 1: "Once Upon a Crime" (Eugene Levy), with John Candy, James Belushi, Cybill Shepherd, Sean Young, Richard Lewis, Ornella Muti, Giancarlo Giannini, and George Hamilton.

Theatre 2: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).

Theatre 3: Through March 19: "Blame It on the Bellboy" (Mark Herman). From March 20: "Noises Off" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Michael Caine, Carol Burnett, Julie Hagerty, John Ritter, Nicollette Sheridan, Christopher Reeve, Marilu Henner, Mark Linn-Baker, and Denholm Elliott.

Theatre 4: "Bugsy" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).

Theatre 2: "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere and Kim Basinger.

Theatre 3: "Article 99" (Howard Deutch), with Ray Liotta and Kiefer Sutherland.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

"Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere and Kim Basinger.

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

Theatre 1: "Grand Canyon" (†).

Theatre 2: "Blame It on the Bellboy" (Mark Herman), with Dudley Moore, Bryan Brown, Richard Griffiths, and Bronson Pinchot.

Crown Gotham, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Where Angels Fear to Tread" (Charles Sturridge), with Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis, Rupert Graves, Giovanni Guidelli, Barbara Jefford, and Helen Mirren.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Gladiator" (Rowdy Herrington), with James Marshall, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Brian Dennehy, Robert Loggia, and Ossie Davis.

Theatre 2: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Shaking the Tree" (Duane Clark), with Arye Gross, Gale Hansen, and Doug Savant.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).

Theatre 2: "This Is My Life" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)

Theatre 1: Through March 19: "Beauty and the Beast" (†). From March 20: "Noises Off" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Michael Caine, Carol Burnett, Julie Hagerty, John Ritter, Nicollette Sheridan, Christopher Reeve, Marilu Henner, Mark Linn-Baker, and Denholm Elliott.

Theatre 2: "Othello" (1952, Orson Welles), with Welles.

Theatre 3: "Medicine Man" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)

Theatre 1: "Shining Through" (David Seltzer), with Michael Douglas and Melanie Griffith.

Theatre 2: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Theatre 3: "The Lawnmower Man."

Theatre 4: "Memoirs of an Invisible Man" (†).

Theatre 5: "Article 99" (Howard Deutch), with Ray Liotta and Kiefer Sutherland.

Theatre 6: "Once Upon a Crime" (Eugene Levy), with John Candy, James Belushi, Cybill Shepherd, Sean Young, Richard Lewis, Ornella Muti, Giancarlo Giannini, and George Hamilton.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "Bugsy" (†).

Theatre 2: Through March 19: "Final Approach" (Eric Steven Stahl), with James B. Sikking, Hector Elizondo, Madolyn Smith, and Kevin McCarthy. From March 20: "Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Under Suspicion" (Simon Moore), with Liam Neeson and Laura San Giacomo.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).

Theatre 2: "The Mambo Kings" (Arne Glimcher), with Armand Assante, Antonio Banderas, and Cathy Moriarty.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

Through March 21: "Hear My Song" (†).

From March 22: "Mediterraneo" (Gabriele Salvatores, in Italian).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

March 16: Theatre closed.

March 17-18: "JFK" (†).

March 19: Theatre closed.

From March 20: "Shadows and Fog" (Woody Allen).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

"Once Upon a Crime" (Eugene Levy), with John Candy, James Belushi, Cybill Shepherd, Sean Young, Richard Lewis, Ornella Muti, Giancarlo Giannini, and George Hamilton.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)

Theatre 1: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Theatre 2: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).

Loews Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 19: "Final Approach" (Eric Steven Stahl), with James B. Sikking, Hector Elizondo, Madolyn Smith, and Kevin McCarthy. From March 20: "Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.
Theatre 4: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury.
Theatre 5: "The Mambo Kings" (Arne Glimcher), with Armand Assante, Antonio Banderas, and Cathy Moriarty.
Theatre 6: "Article 99" (Howard Deutch), with Ray Liotta and Kiefer Sutherland.
Theatre 7: "Gladiator" (Rowdy Herrington), with James Marshall, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Brian Dennehy, Robert Loggia, and Ossie Davis.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through March 19: "Blame It on the Bellboy" (Mark Herman). From March 20: "Noises Off" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Michael Caine, Carol Burnett, Julie Hagerty, John Ritter, Nicollette Sheridan, Christopher Reeve, Marilu Henner, Mark Linn-Baker, and Denholm Elliott.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and (evenings only) "Grand Canyon" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through March 17: "Titicut Follies" (1967, directed by Fred Wiseman), a documentary. March 18-24: "Voice from the Front" (1991, Robyn Hutt, Sandra Elgear, and David Neieran). From March 25: "The Ear" (1969, Karel Kachyna; in Czech).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "35 Up" (Michael Apted), a documentary.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Once Upon a Crime" (Eugene Levy), with John Candy, James Belushi, Cybill Shepherd, Sean Young, Richard Lewis, Ornella Muti, Giancarlo Giannini, and George Hamilton.
Theatre 2: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).
Theatre 2: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Shaking the Tree" (Duane Clark), with Arye Gross, Gale Hansen, and Doug Savant.
Theatre 2: "Europa Europa" (Agnieszka Holland, in German and Russian).
Theatre 3: "Voyager" (Volker Schlöndorff), with Sam Shepard and Julie Delpy.
Theatre 4: "High Heels" (Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "This Is My Life" (†).
Theatre 2: "This Is My Life" (†).
Theatre 3: "Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).
Theatre 4: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.
Theatre 5: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 6: "Gladiator" (Rowdy Herrington), with James Marshall, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Brian Dennehy, Robert Loggia, and Ossie Davis.
Theatre 7: "Once Upon a Crime" (Eugene Levy), with John Candy, James Belushi, Cybill Shepherd, Sean Young, Richard Lewis, Ornella Muti, Giancarlo Giannini, and George Hamilton.
Theatre 8: Through March 19: "Blame It on the Bellboy" (Mark Herman). From March 20: "Noises Off" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Michael Caine, Carol Burnett, Julie Hagerty, John Ritter, Nicollette Sheridan, Christopher Reeve, Marilu Henner, Mark Linn-Baker, and Denholm Elliott.
Theatre 9: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 3: "Shaking the Tree" (Duane Clark), with Arye Gross, Gale Hansen, and Doug Savant.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Beauty and the Beast" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Shaking the Tree" (Duane Clark), with Arye Gross, Gale Hansen, and Doug Savant.
Theatre 2: "Shining Through" (David Seltzer), with Michael Douglas and Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 3: Through March 19: "Final Analysis" (Phil Joanou), with Richard Gere and Kim Basinger. From March 20: "Edward II" (Derek Jarman).
Theatre 4: "The Prince of Tides" (†).
Theatre 5: "Grand Canyon" (†).
Theatre 6: "Gladiator" (Rowdy Herrington,; in English, with Spanish subtitles), with James Marshall and Cuba Gooding, Jr.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Loews Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Kafka" (Steven Soderbergh), with Jeremy Irons.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Shakes the Clown" (Bobcat Goldthwait), with Goldthwait.

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Mississippi Masala" (Mira Nair), with Denzel Washington and Sarita Choudhury.
Theatre 2: "Madame Bovary" (Claude Chabrol; in French), with Isabelle Huppert.

Loews Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"Howards End" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins, Vanessa Redgrave, Helena Bonham Carter, Emma Thompson, and James Wilby

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Meeting Venus" (István Szabó), with Glenn Close and Niels Arestrup.

Loews Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through March 19: "JFK" (†).
From March 20: "Shadows and Fog" (Woody Allen).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"This Is My Life" (†).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through March 19: "Voyager" (Volker Schlöndorff), with Sam Shepard and Julie Delpy. From March 20: "Raise the Red Lantern" (Zhang Yimou; in Chinese).
Theatre 2: "Toto le Heros" (Jaco Van Dormael; in French), with Michel Bouquet.
Theatre 3: "The Double Life of Véronique" (Krzysztof Kieslowski, in French and Polish), with Irène Jacob and Philippe Volter.

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Fried Green Tomatoes" (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Wayne's World" (†).
Theatre 2: "Memoirs of an Invisible Man" (†).
Theatre 3: Through March 19: "The Mambo Kings" (Arne Glimcher), with Armand Assante, Antonio Banderas, and Cathy Moriarty. From March 20: "Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.
Theatre 4: "Gladiator" (Rowdy Herrington), with James Marshall, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Brian Dennehy, Robert Loggia, and Ossie Davis.
Theatre 5: "Article 99" (Howard Deutch), with Ray Liotta and Kiefer Sutherland.
Theatre 6: Through March 19: "Blame It on the Bellboy" (Mark Herman), with Dudley Moore, Bryan Brown, Richard Griffiths, and Bronson Pinchot. From March 20: "Noises Off" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Michael Caine, Carol Burnett, Julie Hagerty, John Ritter, Nicollette Sheridan, Christopher Reeve, Marilu Henner, Mark Linn-Baker, and Denholm Elliott.

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.
Theatre 2: "The Lawnmower Man" (Brett Leonard), with Jeff Fahey and Pierce Brosnan.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Once Upon a Crime" (Eugene Levy), with John Candy, James Belushi, Cybill Shepherd, Sean Young, Richard Lewis, Ornella Muti, Giancarlo Giannini, and George Hamilton.
Theatre 2: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "The Mambo Kings" (directed by Arne Glimcher), with Armand Assante, Antonio Banderas, and Cathy Moriarty.
Theatre 2: To be announced.
Theatre 3: "Bugsy" (†).
Theatre 4: "My Cousin Vinny" (Jonathan Lynn), with Joe Pesci, Ralph Macchio, Marisa Tomei, Mitchell Whitfield, and Fred Gwynne.
Theatre 5: "Memoirs of an Invisible Man" (†).
Theatre 6: Through March 19: To be announced. From March 20: "Basic Instinct" (Paul Verhoeven), with Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone.
Theatre 7: "Highway to Hell" (Ate de Jong), with Patrick Bergin.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through March 19: "Article 99" (Howard Deutch), with Ray Liotta and Kiefer Sutherland.
From March 20: "Noises Off" (Peter Bogdanovich), with Michael Caine, Carol Burnett, Julie Hagerty, John Ritter, Nicollette Sheridan, Christopher Reeve, Marilu Henner, Mark Linn-Baker, and Denholm Elliott.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Once Upon a Crime" (Eugene Levy), with John Candy, James Belushi, Cybill Shepherd, Sean Young, Richard Lewis, Ornella Muti, Giancarlo Giannini, and George Hamilton.
Theatre 2: "The Hand That Rocks the Cradle" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blame It on the Bellboy" (Mark Herman), with Dudley Moore, Bryan Brown, Richard Griffiths, and Bronson Pinchot.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Wayne's World" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Gladiator" (Rowdy Herrington), with James Marshall, Cuba Gooding, Jr., Brian Dennehy, Robert Loggia, and Ossie Davis.
Theatre 2: "American Me" (Edward James Olmos).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Le Cinematographe, 15 Vandam St. (675-4680)
"Resident Alien" (1991, directed by Jonathan Nossiter), with Quentin Crisp.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Through March 17: "Field of Honor" (1989, Jean-Pierre Denis; in French); and "Camille Claudel" (1989, Bruno Nuytten; in French), with Isabelle Adjani.
March 18-19: "Wait Until Spring, Bandini" (1990, Dominique Deruddere), with Joe Mantegna, Faye Dunaway, and Ornella Muti.
March 20-21: "Mystery Train" (1989, Jim Jarmusch); and "Slacker" (1991, Richard Linklater).
March 22-23: "Jean de Florette" (1985, Claude Berri; in French), with Yves Montand, Gérard Depardieu, Elisabeth Depardieu, and Daniel Auteuil; and "Manon of the Spring" (1987, Berri; in French), with Montand, Auteuil, and Emmanuelle Béart.
March 24: "Scrubbers" (1982, Mai Zetterling), with Chrissie Cotterill; and "Rita, Sue and Bob Too" (†).
From March 25: "Swann in Love" (1984, Volker Schlöndorff; in French), with Jeremy Irons, Ornella Muti, and Alain Delon; and "The Sacrifice" (1986, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Swedish), with Erland Josephson.

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
March 16: "Funny Girl" (1968, William Wyler), with Barbra Streisand and Omar Sharif; and "Be Yourself" (1930, Thornton Freeland), with Fanny Brice and Robert Armstrong.
March 17: "His People" (1925, Edward Sloman; silent), with Rudolph Schildkraut; and films from 1903-14 on the theme of Jewish immigrants.
March 18-20: "Goodbye, Columbus" (1969, Larry Peerce), with Richard Benjamin, Ali MacGraw, and Jack Klugman; and "Marjorie Morningstar" (1958, Irving Rapper), with Gene Kelly and Natalie Wood.
March 21-22: "Annie Hall" (1977, Woody Allen), with Allen and Diane Keaton; and "Radio Days" (1987, Allen).
March 23: "None So Blind" (1923, Burton King; silent), with Maurice Costello; "Cohens and Kellys in Trouble" (1933, George Stevens); and "The Shamrock and the Rose" (1927, Jack Nelson; silent).

MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

March 24: "The Yellow Ticket" (1931, Raoul Walsh), with Elissa Landi, Laurence Olivier, and Lionel Barrymore; and "The House of Rothschild" (1934, Alfred L. Werker), with George Arliss, Boris Karloff, Loretta Young, and Robert Young.

From March 25: "The Pawnbroker" (1965, Sidney Lumet), with Rod Steiger, Geraldine Fitzgerald, and Brock Peters; and "Bye Bye Braverman" (†).

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

March 16: "The Tenant" (1976, Roman Polanski), with Polanski; and "Knife in the Water" (1962, Polanski; in Polish).

March 17: "Dr. No" (1963, Terence Young), with Sean Connery, Ursula Andress, and Joseph Wiseman; and "Thunderball" (1965, Young), with Connery, Adolfo Celi, Claudine Auger, and Luciana Paluzzi.

March 18: "Luna" (1979, Bernardo Bertolucci), with Jill Clayburgh and Matthew Barry; and "The Conformist" (1970, Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda.

March 19: "Sudden Fear" (1952, David Miller), with Joan Crawford, Jack Palance, and Gloria Grahame; and "Harriet Craig" (1950, Vincent Sherman), with Crawford and Wendell Corey.

March 20-21: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian); and "Miracle in Milan" (1951, De Sica; in Italian), with Francesco Golissano, Brunella Bovo, Paolo Stoppa, and Emma Gramatica.

March 22: "Animal Crackers" (1930, Victor Herrman) and "Duck Soup" (1933, Leo McCarey), both with the Marx Brothers.

March 23: "Juliet of the Spirits" (1965, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina and Sandra Milo; and "Il Bidone" ("The Swindlers"; 1955, Fellini; in Italian), with Broderick Crawford, Masina, Richard Basehart, and Franco Fabrizi.

March 24: "Twelve Angry Men" (1957, Sidney Lumet), with Henry Fonda, Lee J. Cobb, and Jack Warden; and "Witness for the Prosecution" (1958, Billy Wilder), with Tyrone Power, Marlene Dietrich, Charles Laughton, Elsa Lanchester, and Una O'Connor.

March 25: "Nightmare Alley" (†) and "The Razor's Edge" (see page 24).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—March 16 at 2:30: "Henry IV" (1985, directed by Marco Bellocchio; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale, and Paolo Bonacelli. . . . ¶ March 16 at 6 and March 17 at 2:30: "Padre Padrone" (1977, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani; in Italian). . . ¶ March 16 at 6: "Abraham Lincoln" (1930, D. W. Griffith), with Walter Huston, Una Merkle, and Kay Hammond. . . . ¶ March 17 at 6 and March 19 at 2:30: "Nostalghia" (1984, Andrei Tarkovsky; in Italian), with Erland Josephson. . . . ¶ March 17 at 6: "The Struggle" (1931, D. W. Griffith), with Zita Johann. . . . ¶ March 19 at 6: "Beirut" (1991, Maroun Bagdadi; in French). . . . ¶ March 19 at 6: "Lady of the Pavements" (1929, D. W. Griffith; silent), with Lupe Velez and William Boyd.

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER (AT MOMA)—The first programs in a seventeen-day international festival of new films by new directors. March 20 at 6 and March 21 at 3: "Proof" (Jocelyn Moorhouse, Australia). . . . ¶ March 20 at 9 and March 21 at 11:30: "Traffic Jam" (Mitsuo Kurotsuchi, Japan). . . . ¶ March 21 at 6 and March 22 at 12:15: "A Heart of Glass" (Fehmi Yasar, Turkey). . . . ¶ March 21 at 9 and March 22 at 3: "Laws of Gravity" (Nick Gomez, United States). . . . ¶ March 22 at 6 and March 23 at 9: "Swimming with Tears" (Hirotaka Tashiro, Japan). . . . ¶ March 22 at 9 and March 23 at 6: "Five Girls and a Rope" (Yeh Hung-wei, Taiwan and Hong Kong). . . . ¶ March 24 at 6: "Finding Christa" (Camille Bippops and James Hatch, United States). . . . ¶ March 24 at 9 and March 25 at 6: "Alex" (Teresa Villaverde Cabral, Portugal). . . . ¶ March 25 at 9: "Lovers" (Vicente Aranda, Spain). (Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. For information, call 875-5610.)

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—March 16 at 2 and 6:15 and March 17 at 8 and 9:45: "Scene of the Crime" (1986, André Téchine; in French). . . . ¶ March 16 at 4 and 8:15, and March 17 at 2 and 4:15: "The Killing Floor" (1983, Bill Duke). . . . ¶ March 17 at 6:30: "La Désenchanté" (1990, Benôit Jacquot; in French). . . . ¶ March 18 at 2, 3:45, 6, and 8:30, March 19 at 2 and 4:15, March 20 at 2, 3:30, 5:45, and 7:45, March 21 at 2 and 5:45, March 22 at 2, 4:15, and 6, and March 24 at 3:45, 6, and 7:45: Five different programs of Philip Haas films. . . . ¶ March 21 at 4, 8:15, and 10:15, March 22 at 8 and 9:45, and March 24 at 2 and 9:15: "Triple Bogey on a Par Five Hole" (1991, Amos Poe). . . . ¶ March 25 at 2 and 8:30: "The Magic Flute" (1975, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish). . . . ¶ March 25 at 4:30: "La Méridienne" (1988, Jean-François Amiguet). . . . ¶ March 25 at 6:15: "Journey of Hope" (1990, Xavier Koller).

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—A Dennis Potter retrospective. March 19 at 5:15: "Pennies from Heaven: Parts 1-3" (1978, BBC), with Bob Hoskins. . . . ¶ March 20 at 5:15: "Pennies from Heaven: Parts 4-6". . . . ¶ March 21 at noon: "Pennies from Heaven: Parts 1-6". . . . ¶ March 22 at 2:30: "Brimstone and Treacle" (1976, BBC), with Denholm Elliott, Michael Kitchen, Patricia Lawrence, and Michelle Newell; and "Moonlight on the Highway" (1969, London Weekend Television), with Ian Holm.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"Masters of Cinematography: A Vittorio Storaro Retrospective." March 21-22 at 2: "Apocalypse Now" (1979, Francis Coppola), with Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall, and Martin Sheen. . . . ¶ March 21 at 5: "One from the Heart" (†). . . . ¶ March 22 at 5: "Immortality" (1992, Luigi Bazzoni; in Italian).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—March 18 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Cordélia" (1980, Jean Beaudin; in French). . . . ¶ March 25 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Every Man for Himself" (†).

SYMPHONY SPACE, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—March 16 at 7:30: "Don Giovanni" (1979, Joseph Losey; in Italian), with Ruggero Raimondi. . . . ¶ March 23 at 7:30: "Ludwig" (1973, Luchino Visconti; in Italian), with Helmut Berger, Romy Schneider, Trevor Howard, and Silvana Mangano.

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—Films by Zhang Yimou, director. March 20 at 6: "Ju Dou" (1990, in Mandarin). . . . ¶ March 20 at 8:30: "Red Sorghum" (1988, in Mandarin).

GOETHE HOUSE, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (439-8700)—March 23 at 7: "Celeste" (1981, Percy Adlon, in German), with Eva Mattes, Jurgen Arndt, and Norbert Wartha.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—March 20-21 at 6: Two different programs of early short silent films from Italy. . . . ¶ March 20-21 at 8 and 10: "Candy Mountain" (1988, Robert Frank and Rudy Wurlitzer). . . . ¶ March 21 at 4: A program of Swedish avant-garde films by Ake Karlung, Oscar Reutersvärd, and Olle Hedman. . . . ¶ March 21 at 6: "Out in the Garden" (1991, Vincent Grenier), "Sodom by the Sea" (1989, Harriet Hirshorn and Mary Patierno), "Fade to Black" (1990, Tony Cokes and Donald Trammel), and "How They Saw the New World" (1991, Larry Kless).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

AMERICAN DREAM—A documentary, directed by Barbara Kopple. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Angelika Film Center; starting March 18.)

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST—It's got storytelling vigor and clarity, bright, eclectic animation, and a frisky musical wit. In this Disney version of the fairy tale, Belle (the voice of Paige O'Hara) is a book-reading French provincial girl—a virtuous sort of Mademoiselle Bovary. She dreams of a Prince Charming but gets more than she bargains for when she becomes hostage to the buffalolike Beast (the surprisingly orotund Robby Benson). Underneath his fang-gnashing glower, he's a prisoner of adolescence—unlike Peter Pan, he wants to grow up. He's the opposite of Belle's lunkheaded village suitor, Gaston (Richard White), a narcissistic macho man. Throughout, the Howard Ashman–Alan Menken score is clever and fluid in the best Lerner and Loewe manner, with flashes of oddball humor that keep everything light and bouncy. (Gaston's theme song trumps "C'est Moi," from "Camelot.") There's a great cast of supporting utensils at the Beast's enchanted castle, led by Jerry Orbach in an ebullient vocal turn as the Chevalier-like candleholder, Lumiere. David Ogden Stiers is Cogsworth, the mantel clock; Angela Lansbury is Mrs. Potts, the teapot; and Jo Anne Worley is the Wardrobe. There isn't anything particularly haunting, and not all the script's variations are fresh. But this is easily the zippiest Disney cartoon feature in the thirty years since "101 Dalmatians." Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise directed the screenplay by Linda Woolverton.—M.S. (Guild. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas, and 86th Street East Twin. Matinées only. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through March 19.)

At Film Forum 2, George Arliss in "The House of Rothschild"

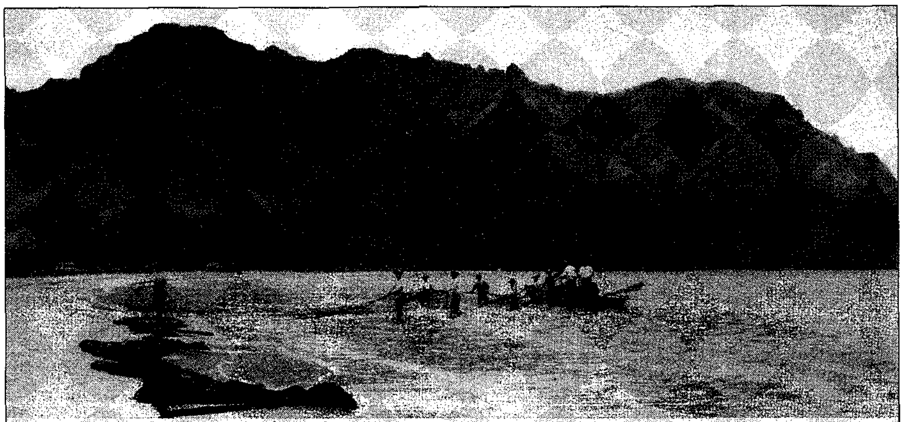
BUGSY—This opulent period gangster movie, written by James Toback and directed by Barry Levinson, is largely a showcase for the old-fashioned star magnetism of Warren Beatty, who plays the legendary Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel. The screenplay portrays Bugsy as a charming, mercurial psychopath with a rather touching taste for glamour; it concentrates on the last few years of the hero's life, when he became a Hollywood celebrity and built the first hotel-casino in Las Vegas. He's a vivid, unpredictable, one-of-a-kind guy, and the filmmakers seem to realize that they can't take their eyes off him for a second. Siegel is a fascinating monster; we don't want to take our eyes off him, either. This is a rich role for Beatty, and he tears into it hungrily. It's the best kind of star performance: Beatty seems entirely himself, but in a new way. He's ferociously, mesmerizingly funny. Annette Bening plays Bugsy's lover, the tough, wily, independent-minded mob courtesan Virginia Hill, and she more than holds her own in her scenes with the star. And the movie is filled with pungent, memorable supporting performances. Ben Kingsley brings a surprisingly dry, elegant sense of comic timing to his portrait of sober Meyer Lansky (one of the hero's partners in the New York mob). Harvey Keitel, as Mickey Cohen, Bugsy's right-hand man in Los Angeles, spits out his profane lines as if they were live firecrackers. Elliott Gould plays the tiny role of Harry Greenberg, an aging, flabby mob schlemiel, and he's absolutely inspired; he plays this dazed character as a Willy Loman who has wandered too far from the old territory. Despite its lavish surface, this is essentially a movie of small, lovingly crafted pleasures. It's smart, swanky fun.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/30/91.) (Loews Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, 23rd Street East Triplex, and Criterion Center.)

Bye Bye Braverman (1968)—Sidney Lumet takes Wallace Markfield's mean-spirited satirical novel, "To an Early Grave," and turns the material into a crudely affectionate comic romp. The movie is often gross and it's sloppily thrown together, but the characters' rhetoric has some juice in it. No one is ever likely to say that he was put to sleep by Sidney Lumet's good taste. Besides, there may never be another movie on the highly specialized subject of the comic failure of New York Jewish intellectuals. When Braverman, a minor literary figure, suddenly dies, his four literary friends gather in Greenwich Village, pile into a Volkswagen, set out to attend the funeral service in Brooklyn, and get lost. It's a low-comedy situation played for emotional wallowing as well as for laughs. Jewish actors playing Jews have a tendency to overdo it, as if they thought they might be taken for Gentiles if they behaved normally, and Lumet appears to have encouraged this; you keep wishing the camera would back away a bit. With George Segal; Jack Warden (miscast as a poet); Sorrell Booke, who has some wonderful mad movements of his head, as a fussy little book reviewer; Joseph Wiseman, whose cold, bitter characterization is very effective. Also with Alan King, Phyllis Newman, Jessica Walter, Anthony Holland, Zohra Lampert (whose voice seems disembodied), and Godfrey Cambridge, who picks up the pace and brings the movie a welcome contrast.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; starting March 25.)

Every Man for Himself (1979)—This picture, which Jean-Luc Godard calls his "second first film," was widely hailed as a return to his great, innovative work of the sixties. It's wonderful to feel the pull of Godard's images again, but the movie may also make you feel empty. The setting is a nameless Swiss city, where the lives of the three main characters are loosely intertwined—Jacques Dutronc is a video filmmaker, Nathalie Baye is the woman who is leaving him, and Isabelle Huppert is a practical-minded prostitute. It's about money and people selling themselves—their minds or their bodies. Godard's political extremism has been replaced by a broader extremism—total contempt, colored by masochism. He's saying "Everything is for sale." It's simplistic cynicism, like that of the barroom pundit who tells you that every man has his price. The look of the picture isn't inhuman, even though what it's saying is; that's its poignancy. Godard shows us the soft shadings of what might have been. He also tickles the audience with a variety of jokes about the joylessness of sex, but he's too despairing to be really funny. In French.—P.K. (Florence Gould Hall; March 25.)

Fried Green Tomatoes—Cancer, wife-beating, burning crosses, barbecue, fat-lady jokes at the expense of Kathy Bates, wisdom dispensed by Jessica Tandy, and female bonding that stops just shy of lesbianism. That's the recipe for this clunky, fraudulent, yet apparently crowd-pleasing laugh- and tear-jerker. In the framing story, Tandy befriends Bates and inspires her with the Depression-era tale of tomboy Idgie (Mary Stuart Masterson) and pretty, demure Ruth (Mary-Louise Parker), who discover happiness when they found the Whistle Stop Café in Idgie's small Alabama home town. The director, Jon Avnet, drenches the palate with sweet sauce, then goes for the throat. The only good white males are run over by a train; in this feminist wish fulfillment, it isn't only tomatoes that get sliced. Written by Fannie Flagg (who has a bit role) and Carol Sobieski from Flagg's novel "Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café."—M.S. (Baronet, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Grand Canyon—Or, the self-importance of being earnest. Kevin Kline plays an L.A. immigration lawyer who lives as comfortably as



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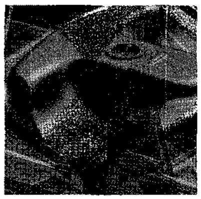

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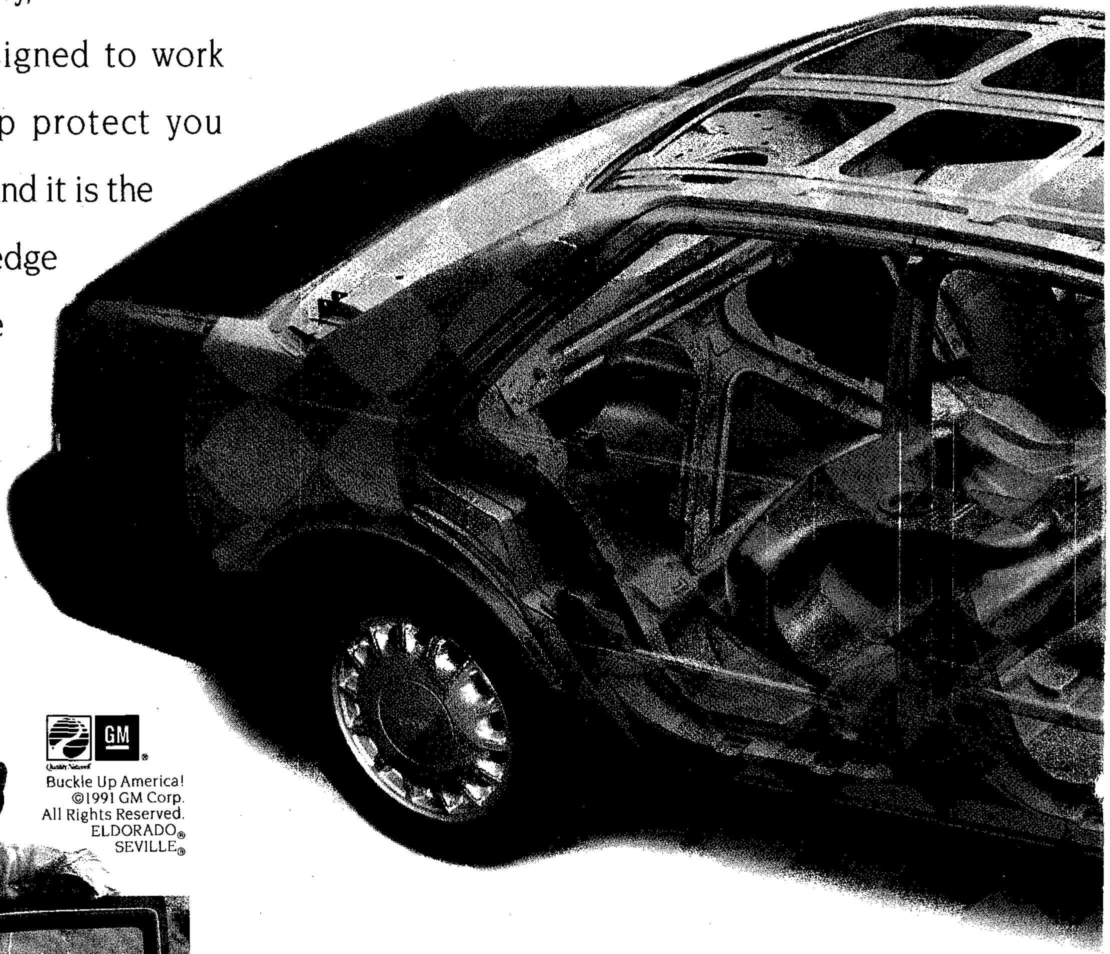

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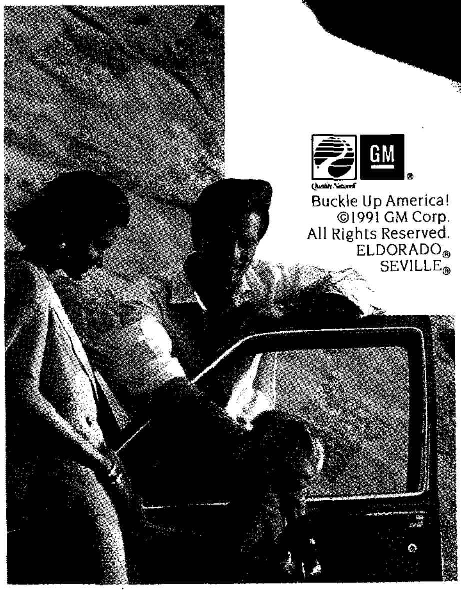

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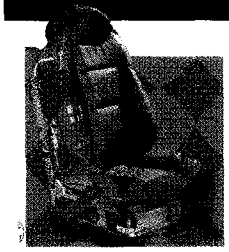

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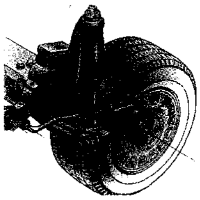

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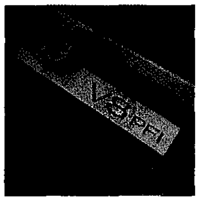

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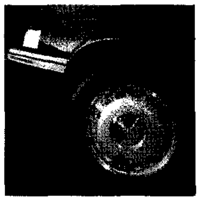

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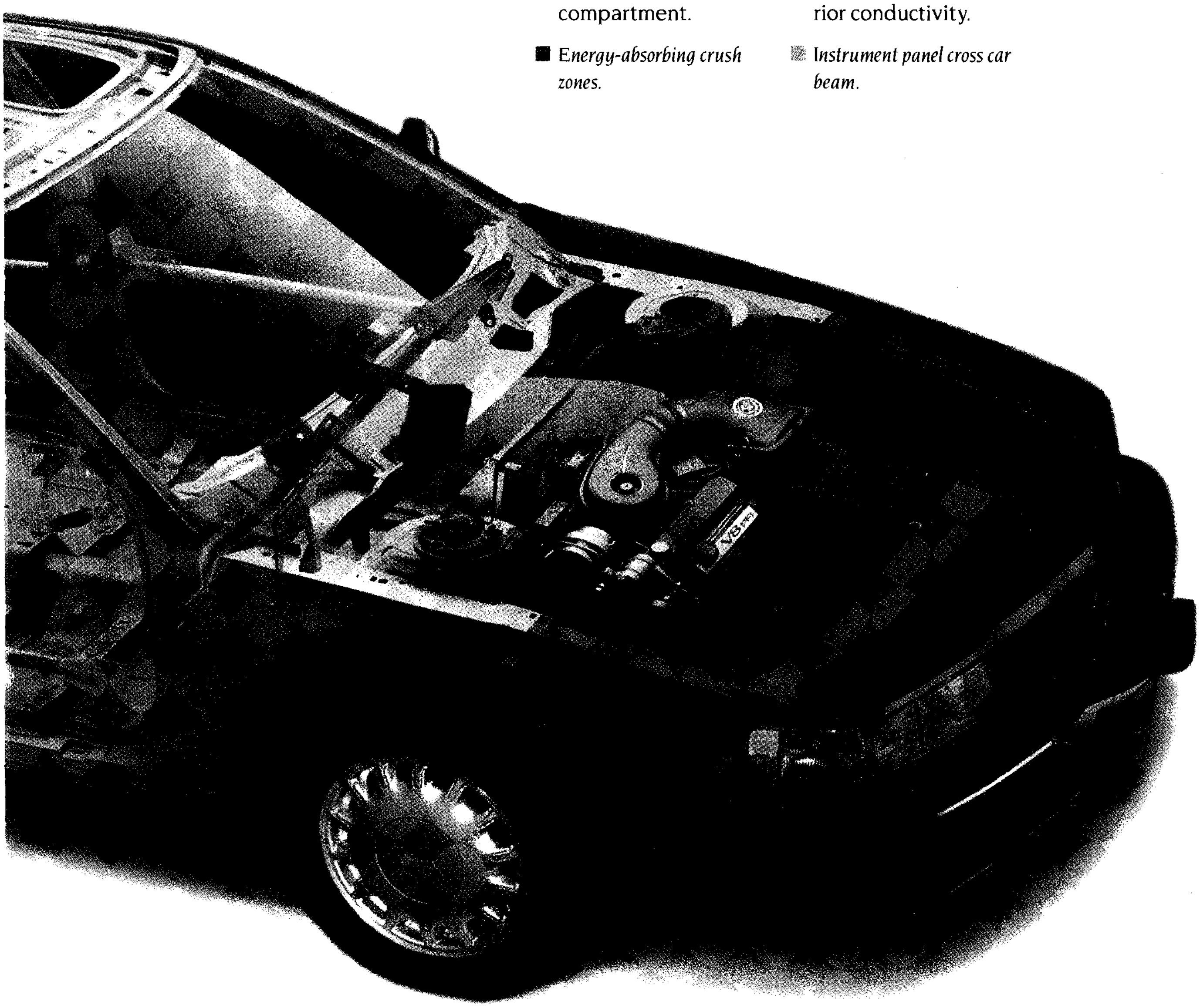


hot entertainment lawyer; Danny Glover plays the tow-truck driver who rescues Kline when his car conks out in a rough black section of the city. Kline plots to repay his savior by moving Glover's sister to a better neighborhood and fixing Glover up with Alfre Woodard. Meanwhile, Kline's wife (Mary McDonnell) surges with maternal ardor when she finds a babe in the shrubbery. The director, Lawrence Kasdan, who co-wrote the script with his wife, Meg, pretends to confront the chaos of contemporary urban life: free-floating anger and violence, racial abrasions, the fragility of family bonds. But he keeps breaking the characters' falls with mystical whoopee cushions—a blend of enriched-white-bread comedy and New Age uplift. By the end of the movie, Kline can do no wrong; even the secretary he once slept with (Mary-Louise Parker) lands on her feet. "Grand Canyon" is a liberal soap opera: it manufactures biodegradable suds. Steve Martin provides a few tart moments as a producer of violent action films, but Kasdan punishes the character by shooting him in the thigh.—M.S. (Gramercy, Sutton, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ 86th Street East Twin. Evenings only.)

The Hand That Rocks the Cradle—This vengeful-nanny thriller has a catchy ad campaign: "Trust is her weapon. Innocence her opportunity. Revenge her only desire." The filmmakers, too, go after the trusting and innocent, but their desire is to make a killing at the box office. The twenty-eight-year-old screenwriter, Amanda Silver, spells out everything as if for the intelligence-impaired. Annabella Sciorra plays Claire, a devoted wife, mother, and, yes, botanist who blows the whistle on a lascivious gynecologist, catalyzing his suicide. Rebecca De Mornay is Peyton, the bad doctor's widow, who loses her own child and lies her way into Claire's nursery. And Ernie Hudson is the heroic, mentally challenged handyman who is wise with children: his name, of course, is Solomon. (Claire's husband, Michael, played by Matt McCoy, is a nonentity.) With its banal, docile household threatened by an enemy within, the film is like "The Stepfather" without wit or irony. De Mornay's Peyton gets off one campy verbal swipe at Solomon that's sure to be a favorite at high-school study halls, but Julianne Moore, as Michael's first love and Claire's friend, gives the performance of the movie. She's coiled and out there, like an exposed spring. She's also funny; she makes spikiness likable. Curtis Hanson directed, impersonally.—M.S. (23rd St. West Triplex, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas. Evenings only.)

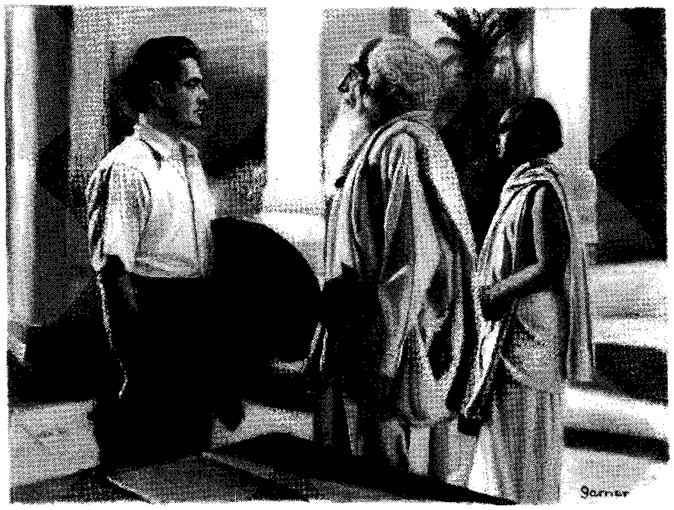
Hear My Song—In this small-scale comedy, Peter Chelsom, a first-time director, takes a whimsical conceit and sells it so hard that it loses most of its fragile charm. Micky O'Neill (played by Adrian Dunbar, who co-wrote the screenplay with Chelsom) manages a Liverpool music hall that caters to the local Irish community; the movie is about his attempt to find a legendary Irish tenor named Josef Locke, who hasn't been heard from in thirty years. Micky goes to Ireland to persuade Locke to return to England for a concert; on the home soil, the hero finds himself in a realm of ancient eccentricity and unearthly light, and the movie finds itself in Bill Forsyth territory. Chelsom tries, too strenuously, to evoke the enchanted comic tone of "Local Hero," and Dunbar seems to punctuate every gag with a roguish smile (often shooting one of these twinklers, unconscionably, over his shoulder). The relentless quirkiness is annoying, but the story is, on its own terms, well constructed, and the filmmakers take their fey, sentimental humor right to the limit: you can't say that they don't have the courage of their elfinness. And when Ned Beatty, who plays Locke, is on the screen the picture is nearly as transporting as it's intended to be. His performance is large-spirited comic acting: a pure specimen of Celtic soulfulness, the magical substance that everyone else in the movie has been trying to produce synthetically. Also with Shirley Anne Field.—T.R. (3/9/92) (Village East Cinemas. . . . ¶ 68th St. Playhouse; through March 21.)

JFK—Oliver Stone's movie means to demonstrate that the assassination of John F. Kennedy was not the act of a disturbed Marxist loner named Lee Harvey Oswald but the result of a vast, complex right-wing conspiracy. The screenplay, by Stone and Zachary Sklar, packs an extraordinary amount of assassination lore into three hours and eight minutes; it also includes a ton of speculative material about governmental misconduct, and quite a few invented characters. The movie is a thick gumbo of truths, half-truths, unverifiable hypotheses, and pure rant, and Stone ladles it out indiscriminately. In essence, the conspiracy theory argued here amounts to a series of inferential leaps proceeding from a speculation (that J.F.K. was killed because he wanted to pull out of Vietnam and end the Cold War). It's all bombast and misdirection, like a courtroom summation by a lawyer who knows that he can't win on the evidence. Stone comes on like a fearless radical, but his attitude toward the audience is firmly in the Hollywood tradition: he tries to bypass the intellect and go straight for the gut. The picture plays like an endless episode of "America's Most Wanted." Its hysterical manner and its slipshod handling of the facts actually have the effect of diminishing the credibility of the case for conspiracy. The clearest sounds we hear in this movie are those of Oliver Stone shooting himself in the foot. With Kevin Costner as New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison, Sissy Spacek as his wife, Gary Oldman as Oswald, and an all-star cast of witnesses and conspirators.—T.R. (1/13/92) (Loews Village Theatre VII. . . . ¶ Loews Columbus Circle; through March 19. . . . ¶ Loews Tower East; March 17-18.)

Medicine Man—Sean Connery, in the title role of a botanist/biochemist who discovers a cure for cancer in the Amazon rain forest, plays the kind of droll grizzly who calls his helper/boss (Lorraine Bracco) Bronx even though she says she comes from Brooklyn. Doubtless Connery could come up with some appropriate one-syllable nicknames for this dead mass of a movie. He provides the only hint of amusement with his seemingly effortless and virile charm. Bracco lets all the perspiration show—and in the jungle that's a ton of sweat. Written by Tom Schulman ("Dead Poets Society") and Sally Robinson, from an original story by Schulman, the film is meant to be message entertainment. But any info it has to offer falls between the wisecracks, and as fun it fizzles. The director, John McTiernan, lets the audience get too far ahead of the protagonists. Viewers yell out the missing ingredient to the cancer cure long before Connery and Bracco cry eureka.—M.S. (Cinema 3rd Avenue. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas. Evenings only.)

Memoirs of an Invisible Man—A new Invisible Man film rigged with up-to-date special effects from Industrial Light & Magic should be bright, transparent fun. And whenever Chevy Chase, as the faded hero, pulls off a nonchalant gag—such as offhandedly redressing a purse-snatching—the movie has a sly, casual appeal. But the director, John Carpenter, allows the usual bilge of espionage and chase movies to swamp any humorous, inventive moments. The Invisible Man for the nineties is no longer a mad scientist but a self-centered stock analyst who gets caught in a cyclotron accident; he bonds with an idealistic documentary filmmaker (Daryl Hannah) while eluding the clutches of an obsessed spy (Sam Neill). Chase is thin even when he's invisible. And guess what? Being invisible makes the yuppie a better person.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Nightmare Alley (1947)—A tough-minded treatment of telepathy. It opens in the carnival world, where the ultimate in how low a man can sink is represented by the Geek, who bites the heads off live chickens; shuddering dipsomaniacs take the job, for a bottle a day. We know that this is what is in store for the smart, smiling young climber Stan (Tyrone Power); this shrewd, absorbing movie is about how he gets to that point. Stan eagerly and



Tyrone Power and Cecil Humpreys in "The Razor's Edge"

Darryl F. Zanuck's first choice to direct Twentieth Century-Fox's three-million-dollar 1946 adaptation of W. Somerset Maugham's "The Razor's Edge" (playing March 25, at Theatre 80 St. Marks) was George Cukor, who ditched the script Zanuck had commissioned from Lamar Trotti and invited Maugham to write his own. The novelist cautioned: "This is, on the whole, a comedy and should be played lightly by everyone except in the definitely serious passages." He called for "speed, speed, speed." When the film began shooting, Maugham and Cukor were out; Trotti's script was back, and Edmund Goulding was the director. Clocking in at a hundred and forty-six minutes, "The Razor's Edge" became Hollywood's quintessential gasbag epic.

It reaches pinnacles of camp even before the questing hero, Tyrone Power, seeks out a guru in the Himalayas. On the whole, this is a travesty and is played heavily by everyone except in the definitely humorous passages. The material is probably funnier this way. The entire movie is puffed up—if the celluloid could speak, its speech would be orotund. And the performers keep acting up to match the scale of the production. Power is a proto-hippie who opts out of America's post-First World War boom and goes to Europe (and points east) in order to find himself; Gene Tierney is the gorgeous Chicago débutante who breaks off their engagement (to her bitter regret) when she realizes that she can't be part of his spiritual crusade; Anne Baxter is the decent woman who becomes wanton after a car accident kills her beloved husband and child. Add Herbert Marshall as oh-so-worldly "Mr. Maugham," and Clifton Webb as a punctilious snob with a heart of platinum, and you've got an embarrassment of embarrassments. "The Razor's Edge" is nothing if not overripe—and in camp overripeness is all.

ruthlessly learns everything he can from the plump mind reader Zeena (Joan Blondell, in a rich, intensely likable performance), after getting rid of her burnt-out partner (Ian Keith, who brings unexpected depth to his small role). Using Zeena's tricks, Stan becomes a headliner in a Chicago night club and begins to sample the possibilities of spiritualist rackets. The film loses its imaginative energy once it moves out of the ripe, sleazy carny milieu, and from the start the technique of the director, Edmund Goulding, is conventional, even a little stodgy. Still, the material, adapted from William Gresham's novel by Jules Furthman, is unusual and the cast first-rate. Power, who persuaded Twentieth Century-Fox to let him play the double-crossing heel-charlatan, puts his black-Irish good looks to ambivalent effect. With Coleen Gray giving one of her freshly thought-out performances as Stan's girl; Helen Walker as Lilith, the blackmailing psychologist who outsmarts him; Taylor Holmes as the aged industrialist who is conned into believing that Stan can help him communicate with his dead sweetheart, and Mike Mazurki as the carny strong man. Cinematography by Lee Garmes.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 25.)

ONE FROM THE HEART (1982)—Francis Ford Coppola's jewelled version of a film student's experimental pastiche—the kind set in a magical junk yard. You get the feeling that the movie grew by accretion—that Coppola piled so many visual ideas and comedy bits on top of the small story he started with that it disappeared from sight and the movie turned into something like a poet's salute to the banal silver screen. It's set in a metaphorical Las Vegas (constructed at Zoetrope Studios) on Independence Day, when Frannie (Teri Garr), who works at the Paradise Travel Agency, walks out on the man she has been living with—Hank (Frederic Forrest), who runs Reality Wrecking. The holiday is treated like Mardi Gras, with crowds dancing through the street. All we're asked to care about is whether Hank, who's in love with Frannie, will win her back. Or, rather, this story being negligible, what we're asked to respond to is Coppola's confectionery artistry. The movie is very pretty and sometimes eerily charming, but the effects don't have any emotional meaning in terms of the characters. A day later the film is as blurry in the mind as the memory of a psychedelic light show. With Nastassia Kinski, Raul Julia, Harry Dean Stanton, and Lainie Kazan. From a script by Armyan Bernstein and Coppola; there's a song track, with Tom Waits and Crystal Gayle telling us the meaning of what we're seeing and wailing words of wisdom. Dean Tavoularis designed the production.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; March 21.)

THE PRINCE OF TIDES—Barbra Streisand's film, adapted from Pat Conroy's 1986 novel, is a big, earnest psychoanalytic soap opera. It's a story in which people come to terms with their past, make peace with the demons that have haunted them since childhood, learn how to let go of the "dysfunctional" emotional patterns inflicted on them by their parents, and become sensitive, caring human beings. Streisand treats this banal material affectionately, even reverently, but it plays better on the screen than it does on the page. Her direction is smooth and canny, and she has distilled the novel to its corn-based essence. But the fumes of the book's terrible ideas linger in the air. After a while, everything begins to feel predictable. Conroy's narrative method (he co-wrote the screenplay, with Becky Johnston) consists of establishing characters who embody common stereotypes, setting them in motion around each other, and then watching them follow the courses that he's mapped for them: his message is one of change and liberation, but his characters' orbits are fixed. As the soul-searching hero, Tom Wingo, Nick Nolte bears the weight of all the movie's ambitions, and, for the most part, he carries his burden with miraculous grace. Streisand plays a sympathetic New York psychiatrist and never seems to get the hang of the role, but most of the cast performs heroically: Blythe Danner, as Tom's wife, and Kate Nelligan, as his mother, are wonderful. This is an admirably scrupulous job of literary adaptation; it's the material that's dysfunctional.—T.R. (1/27/92) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Orpheum VII, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

RITA, SUE AND BOB TOO (1987)—Amiable, married Bob (George Costigan), who lives in a treeless suburb of Bradford, in the north of England, is the kind of middle-class Don Juan who starts looking devilishly handsome around closing time at the pub. In grim Bradford, it always feels like closing time, so Bob has no trouble getting his bit on the side—two bits on the side, actually, in the chunky forms of Rita (Siobhan Finneran) and Sue (Michelle Holmes), a pair of teen-age babysitters from the housing projects. Alan Clarke, the director, deserves credit for trying to make a raunchy farce in these bleak, unlikely settings, and he partially succeeds. The movie is plain and unpretentious, doesn't moralize about its characters, and never becomes sentimental about the conditions of their lives. Clarke is right to go for laughs rather than pathos, but too often he doesn't get them, and his faulty comic timing exposes the thinness of Andrea Dunbar's script. Also with Lesley Sharp and Kulvinder Ghir.—T.R. (8th St. Playhouse; March 24.)

THIS IS MY LIFE—The first film directed by the novelist and screenwriter Nora Ephron is a modest, uninsistent family comedy about a single mom from Queens who becomes a famous standup comic and, in the process, strains her relationship with her two young daughters. The movie is consistently good-humored without ever being really funny; the scenes float by on a lulling current of amiability and mild perkiness, and nothing surprising or incongruous bobs up. The picture's wispy, genial not-badness is a little puzzling, because both the material and the cast are strong enough to support a much sturdier and more satisfying piece of entertainment. The script, by the director and her sister Delia, drastically compresses a good 1988 novel (called "This Is Your Life") by Meg Wolitzer; the story emerges from the screenwriters' rapid-weight-loss clinic dazed, unused to its new lightness. The heroine is played by the wonderful, raspy-voiced Julie Kavner, and Samantha Mathis and Gaby Hoffmann, the young actresses who play her daughters, are lively and skillful; none of the performers leave a memorable impression, though. Ephron doesn't go for big vulgar laughs or big vulgar emotions. Most of the time, it's hard to tell exactly what she is going for: the discreet, temperate tone doesn't betray any sense of urgency or purpose. The movie's lack of drive is frustrating, and its well-manneredness is oddly out of keeping with the subject matter. The picture doesn't have the steel or the shamelessness that good comedians need. It's all buildup and no payoff—a shaggy-dog story, not a killer routine. Also with Dan Aykroyd and Carrie Fisher. The hideous score is by Carly Simon.—T.R. (3/9/92) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Coronet, Chelsea Cinemas, and 62nd & Broadway.)

WAYNE'S WORLD—"Saturday Night Live" has become a repackaging industry. The extended antics of vidiot savants Wayne Campbell (Mike Myers) and Garth Algar (Dana Carvey) betray the same slapped-together quality as the TV specials "Toonces, the Cat Who Could Drive a Car" and "Saturday Night Live Goes Commercial," though the film is not as entertaining. Seen in five-minute spurts on "S.N.L.," beaming out their cable-access program from Wayne's basement, these two come off as cracked bellwethers of the Next Big Things of suburban youth culture, Hard Rock Division. (Their pre-"Truth or Dare" show with Madonna was a classic.) In the movie, Myers still boasts his inexplicably confident and cheery expressions—he's a mischievous smile button. But Carvey overworks his twisted mouth. Wayne and Garth weren't meant to be frozen on celluloid the way they are in this parody of coöptation, which casts them as victims of a manipulative commercial-TV promoter (Rob Lowe). Here they function as leaders of a nostalgia-fest for audiences with short attention spans, paying homage to, yes, "Terminator 2" as well as syndicated TV favorites like "Laverne and Shirley" and "Mission: Impossible." (Sadly, the Tooncinator fails to make a guest appearance.) Carvey has one good bit, playing out a murder with some frosted crullers, and the ever-game Lowe musters up a funny walk after a cop gives him a heavy frisk. Penelope Spheeris directed, from a script by Myers, Bonnie Turner, and Terry Turner.—M.S. (Loews Village Theatre VII, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Loews Astor Plaza.)

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THE
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A WOMAN we know writes:

A few years ago, I started walking a three-mile loop every morning around my tree-lined Brooklyn neighborhood. I had no qualms about doing it in the dark, if necessary, and no trouble adopting the inflexible discipline of seven days a week and in all weather. I was well trained. For several months before I started this regimen, I was chief caretaker of the ancient family dog, whose failing kidneys had rendered him incontinent. He and I were often out five or six times in a twenty-four-hour period, during which I often managed to see both the evening and the morning stars.

When I started walking alone, I got into the habit of giving myself mental assignments—a question to answer or a problem to solve—and the habit has persisted. Most of the questions concern work or family, though now and then I'll pose an impersonal query, like a debate topic, just for the hell of it. Some issues have actually been put to bed in the course of a single walk; some I will probably never resolve. But one thing I can count on is the comforting daily rhythm of the walk itself: a mile of limestones and brownstones; a mile of small businesses and shops; and a mile of low apartment houses mixed with old industrial buildings. I almost wrote "comfortable" instead of comforting, and that would have been a real slip. Some of what I observe makes me very *un*comfortable: the men and women in thin denim jackets who line up at the methadone clinic; or the bearded vagrant who kneels with a paper cup every morning next to the subway entrance; or an entire apartment's worth of furniture in jumbled abandon across the street from our place. (Families from that building often disappear overnight after receiving eviction notices, and their belongings rarely follow them.)

Yesterday, the question I took along for myself was: What qualifications, apart from those fixed by the Constitution, would I set for a person seeking to be President of the United States? My first answer didn't need to be walked out: I'd like someone who wrote his or her own speeches. But that is probably too much to hope for, so on my walk I decided that I wanted a President who had had the experience of living as an adult in a neighborhood that he or she had got to know by walking through it regularly. I want a hero of the sort that Thoreau wrote about: "The chivalric and heroic spirit which once belonged to the Rider seems now to reside in, or perchance to have subsided into, the Walker,—not the Knight, but Walker, Errant. He is a sort of fourth estate, outside of Church and State and People."

Today, I refined the question: What qualifications would I set for someone seeking to be President of my neighborhood? And I decided to limit the definition of my neighborhood to four square blocks—the ones that can sustain most of a household's daily needs. Roughly in the center, there is a little greasy spoon, which longtime residents of the neighborhood say is both the oldest business in the area and has always been the busiest. The premises are the size of a small storefront. There is a counter with eighteen revolving stools, and along the opposite long wall are eight booths. The specialty of the house is homemade doughnuts; the dominant smell is a mixture of cooking grease and cigarette smoke; and on some of the Formica surfaces are spots of dried ketchup and gravy that look about as old as a first edition of "Walden." Still, the place is packed morning, noon, and night. Prices are good: a dollar-sixty-five will bring you a hearty two-egg breakfast. There are other cheap restaurants nearby, but this one supplies something else: an uncategorizable atmosphere that makes you want to forget your obligations and hang around, nursing a cup of coffee and passing the time of day. Anyone who sought to be President of my neighborhood might well begin campaigning here.

After completing my walk, I dropped in for breakfast. On the counter stool to my left was a man buried in the *Times*. To my right was a middle-aged man dressed in jeans and a peacoat. He was conversing with the fellow to his right, who was at least a generation older and was dressed in slacks, a belted jacket, and a beret. When I tuned in, they were arguing the relative merits of Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix as virtuoso guitar players. "Jimi Hendrix," the older man said. "There was someone."

Peacoat said, "But he did all that experimenting when he was too young." The older man was silent, looked down, and stirred his coffee. After a moment, Peacoat dropped his voice and said, "How about if I get you a job? It's been a year since you've worked, right?"

The older man said, "That would be nice," but he kept his eyes on his stirring hand.

Then Peacoat raised his voice again. "What do you think of the salaries that ballplayers are getting? Fourteen million!"

A new customer—another middle-aged man, attired from head to toe in black—slid onto a stool next to the older man and said, "Hey, everyone gets at least a million now."

Peacoat said, "Do you remember Jim Bouton? He had better stats than any of these guys, and what did he make? Twenty-seven thou. Chicken feed."

The newcomer said, "I can go back further. Take Babe Ruth. Remember what he said one time? 'I had a pretty good year, better than the President.' "

Peacoat laughed, and said, "Imagine what the President made back then."

The older man looked up. "Who *was* the President then?" he asked.

A lot of guesses were ventured, but no one was quite sure.

•

AND another friend, a young man, writes:

I have no idea if Paul Tsongas will be able to rebound from his Super Tuesday setbacks, or capitalize on his Utah and Maryland primary victories, or win the nomination, or carry the White House, or rebuild America. I do have some inside knowledge, however, that lets me predict that he is pleasantly unlikely to spontaneously develop charisma, and it may help explain some of his unexpected success.

I grew up in the Fifth Congressional District of Massachusetts, which stretched from the affluent Boston suburbs on the edge of Route 128 to the shabby red brick mill towns of Lowell and Lawrence. I was something of a premature political junkie; in the fall of 1972, I spent every Saturday for weeks selling "McGovern for President" buttons outside the Stop & Shop in my home town. Each week, a particular old man called me a Communist and tried to spit in my bag of badges, and that made me feel as if I were a major participant in the turmoil of that era, along with Abbie and Ho Chi Minh, whoever he was. Two years later, at the age of fourteen, I had developed into a seasoned political operative. My willingness to sort envelopes by Zip Code for hours at a stretch was so well established that I was actively recruited to volunteer in Paul Tsongas's local office when he embarked on his maiden run for the House of Representatives.

Save for the strong rhyme of "Tsongas" and "Congress," this campaign had very little going for it at the start. The district had been Republican for generations, and the incumbent was a man of unimpeachable blandness, against whom it was difficult to muster any convincing argument. Not only that but our candidate had large bags under his eyes, he mumbled when he spoke, and he all but refused to smile. When we youthful volunteers weren't knocking on doors across the district, or standing at busy intersections with signs, or putting together lists of likely voters to call on Election Day, we were occasionally driven to some Knights of Columbus or Veterans of Foreign Wars or Sons of Italy hall to swell the crowd at one of his speeches. We would watch in mild agony as he swallowed his words and stared at his shoes and generally acted as though he were trying out, much against his will, for a fourth-grade play. I distinctly remember hurting for him—he was so obviously sincere, and the things he was saying made sense, and, besides, I had a misfit adolescent's intuitive understanding of shyness.

Making a virtue of necessity in this Republican stronghold, where he was being outspent two to one, he concentrated on small donations. The fund-raiser I remember best was a twenty-five-mile bikeathon across the district. I worked my neighborhood beforehand, hitting up the parents of all my friends, and when the big day came I had several hundred dollars pledged. As I recall, Tsongas himself had planned to ride only the first mile or so with us, but some of his aides had done too good a job of collecting sponsors in his name; if he made the whole ride, he stood to get several thousand dollars—too big a percentage of his campaign budget to pass up. So there he was, pedalling along next to a couple of dozen or so of his supporters. Perhaps it was more than twenty-five miles—I remember that it was a hot day and that the ride took a long time. Tsongas was not joking and smiling and exuding but just riding quietly along with the rest of us, and if I had been a professional political analyst I would probably have pronounced him utterly incapable of beating anyone. (In the Washington *Post* last month, a professional political analyst said he had "negative charisma," and also a "dweeb-quotient" higher than Michael Dukakis's.) By the end of the afternoon, there were mostly kids left—maybe half a dozen of us—and something about his total lack of insincerity made us feel very adult. The inability to condescend is a rare trait in a politician, and it worked on us. The ride ended next to a Friendly's ice-cream parlor somewhere in the suburbs, where a van was coming to pick us up. Instead of making a big deal of going in and treating us all to ice cream, he pulled a twenty-dollar bill out of his pocket and told us to go spend it on something while he waited with the bikes. We went in and, by unspoken agreement—though I imagine we were all normally greedy kids—ordered small Cokes, which couldn't have cost more than a quarter apiece. And for the candidate something grand—a raspberry lime rickey, maybe. We handed it to him along with about eighteen dollars in change, he smiled his shy smile, and we felt all the more adult; and the van came, and home we went to stuff more envelopes.

I have no idea if this grown-up approach to campaigning can be adapted to balancing the budget or reducing the balance-of-payments deficit or encouraging Americans to save. But I do know that a few weeks later the Fifth District confounded the professional political analysts and elected Paul Tsongas to the House of Representatives by a wide margin.

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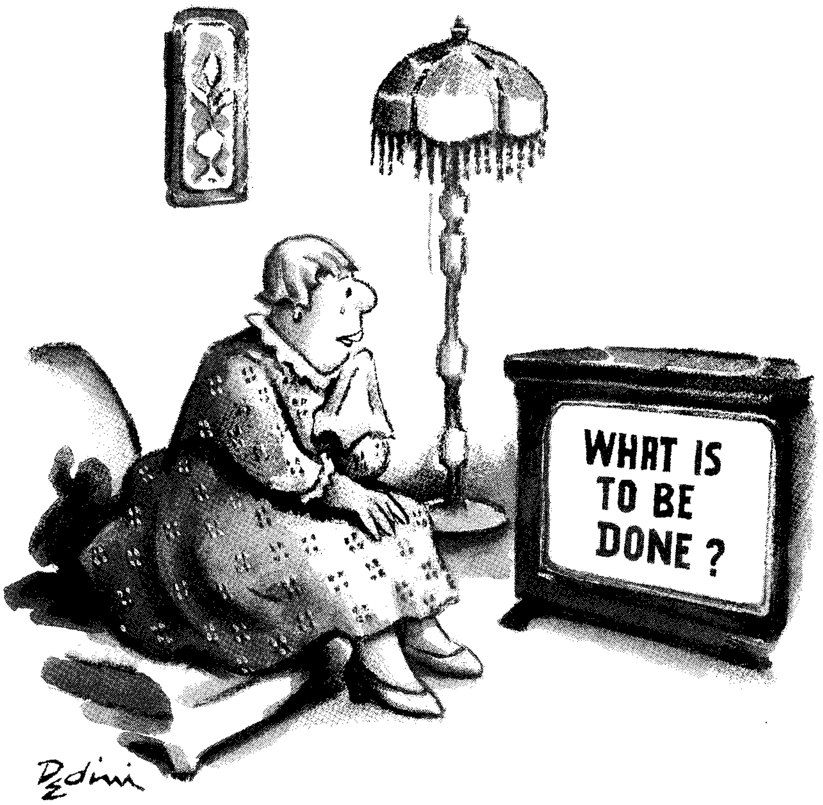
Shirley's Worms

VERY few things make Shirley Irons squeamish. Spiders do, but not much else. As last Christmas was


WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Russian Soap Opera

• •

approaching, Shirley started thinking fondly about worms. She had come across an article about worm boxes in the *Times*. Later, by coincidence, she also read an information-packed article in *Organic Gardening* by Mary Appelhof, the author of "Worms Eat My Garbage," which was first published in 1982 and is still regarded as one of the finest vermicomposting books ever written. In the proper environment, the proper worms—*Eisenia fetida* and *Lumbricus rubellus*, commonly known as redworms—will do whatever is necessary to convert organic kitchen waste into rich compost. Like most people, Shirley had some garbage, and she wanted to do something truly useful with it. While everyone else in North America was sitting around listening to the news and worrying and asking why everything was going to hell, Shirley was asking her friend Don Dudley to build her a worm box for Christmas.

For fifteen years, Shirley has lived in a loft on the edge of the garment district. In warm weather, she retreats to a cabin in the Catskills. Her floor in the loft building used to be a handbag factory. It has two bathrooms, with signs above the doors: "Men" and "Women." Shirley hasn't made fancy improvements to slick up the place. There's a vestibule, a roomy kitchen, and a not very well-lit space, about twenty by thirty, that she uses as a bedroom, dining room, and studio. Shirley spends three days a week in a medical facility devoted to schizophrenia research, and the rest of her working hours in her loft, making paintings that are, for the most part, abstract.

When she asked us to drop by, not long after Christmas, it was to show us her worm box in its pristine condition. "That's my Christmas present," she said. "It's bigger than anything I expected. It's actually designed for a family of four to six."

The worm box was two feet by three and a half, and a foot deep. The bottom was plywood, with half-inch air holes, and the top and back panels were also plywood. The box stood on four stubby legs, with casters. None of the designs in the worm-box literature Shirley and Don had consulted mentioned wheels, so that feature was a novelty, as were the front and side panels, which Don had made of Plexiglas. The whole thing looked durable, user-friendly, and innocent of high-tech pretensions—not unlike an army of hardworking worms. Shirley herself has hazel eyes, a pale complexion, a downtown haircut (brown ponytail going gray, short on the sides), and a tendency to smile a lot. She wore a black turtleneck, black denims, black boots, and spiky aluminum sun-god earrings.

Shirley had ordered two thousand redworms from a place in Florida called Ron's Rabbitry (twenty-four dollars, plus shipping), and their arrival was imminent. To get the worm box cooking, the recipe called for a gallon of dirt, a gallon of sand, a lot of torn-up newspapers for bedding, water, and, of course, garbage. For several weeks, Shirley had been saving her garbage, and Don had thoughtfully been bringing his garbage around whenever he dropped by. An amount sufficient to provoke a major fruit-fly infestation had accumulated, but Shirley still wasn't confident that she had enough. "I'm worried about starving my worms," she said. "I'm thinking of going to some of the Korean greengrocers in the neighborhood and asking for some of their leftovers."

Once the worm box became operational, it would take from six to eight weeks for the occupants to produce usable compost. Then Shirley would have to confront the issue of what to *do* with the compost. "I have little fantasies about taking it to Madison Square Park and putting a little good food around the trees," she said. "But I'm afraid the shock might kill them."

A few days later, we got a phone call from Shirley: "My worms just arrived, and they are the most elegant things to see, so I called thinking you might want to come over and see them, looking a way that they'll never look again."

We were busy with something else, so we asked her to describe them.

"They're in the worm box now, along with the garbage," she said. "Yes, I put in the dirt, and also this stuff they arrived in—it's black and looks like leaf mold. I put in all that stuff and some shredded *Timeses*, and put the worms on top, and I admired them for a while. They come in all sizes, although none of them are as big as the worms you saw on the sidewalk when you were a kid. The babies are the length of your fingernail and the thickness of a piece of thread, and they're all white. The big ones are a quarter inch in diameter and two inches long. That's how long the one I stepped on was."

Several weeks elapsed—long enough for the worms to have produced their first load of compost—and the other day we went back. Shirley met us in the lobby of her building. As we rode up in the elevator, she pointed to something flitting around the ceiling. "Look. A fruit fly."

"How can you tell whether that's one of yours?"

"I brand them."

The worm box was in the vestibule. "I had a studio visit yesterday," she said. "It was the director of the New Museum and one of the museum's trustees. I moved the worm box out here, because the last time I had a studio visit I noticed after the people left that there were a lot of fruit flies in their coffee cups."

The compost was in the back of the worm box, and a load of new garbage had been deposited in the front.

"I've got worms moving from the back to the front," Shirley said. "It's very exciting."

She pointed out fresh worm tracks on the Plexiglas front panel; a few wigglers were visible among the grapefruit rinds, lettuce, onion peels, coffee grounds, Swiss chard, carrot scrapings, leeks, basil, fennel, toast crusts, pumpkin tortellini with sun-dried tomatoes, and shredded newsprint. Then she opened the worm box. A couple of strips of flypaper had been fixed to the underside of the lid—a recent retrofitting. "Before I put the flypaper in there, I'd been trying to control the fruit flies by opening the lid, waving my arms, watching the flies go out, watching them land, and spraying them with bug spray," she said, pantomiming. "Since I've started using the flypaper, I only spray in extreme situations."

In the back of the box was some stuff that looked like wet garden soil but was, of course, mostly compost. Shirley reached in and rubbed a clump with her fingertips. "It's a little hard to distinguish the coffee grounds from the compost," she said. "I drink a lot of coffee." Some pepper seeds had sprouted and grown a couple of inches above the compost. The only vegetable matter that seemed not to be breaking down easily was a bunch of leafy tulip stems. "The worms are finally getting to those leaves," she said. "I was beginning to wonder whether they were plastic."

Welcoming a couple of thousand tiny living animals into her loft represented a major innovation for Shirley. She actually owns a potted plastic fern. She also owns three cats, but otherwise seems comfortable with inert specimens from nature. We noticed, or had pointed out to us, a small stuffed squirrel; a stuffed alligator; a dead housefly inside a plastic fishing-lure case; a plaster wall sconce cast from a turkey breastbone; a tortoise shell; two well-preserved water bugs; and the dried remains of a garden mole.

"The most direct and least polite reaction to the worm box came from my friend John," Shirley said. "He was over for dinner one night, and as he was leaving he said, 'I told you about fruit flies. I told you about spontaneous generation. And this worm box stinks.' He was right about the smell. I think it was because I'd put some cheese in there. So I took the cheese out."

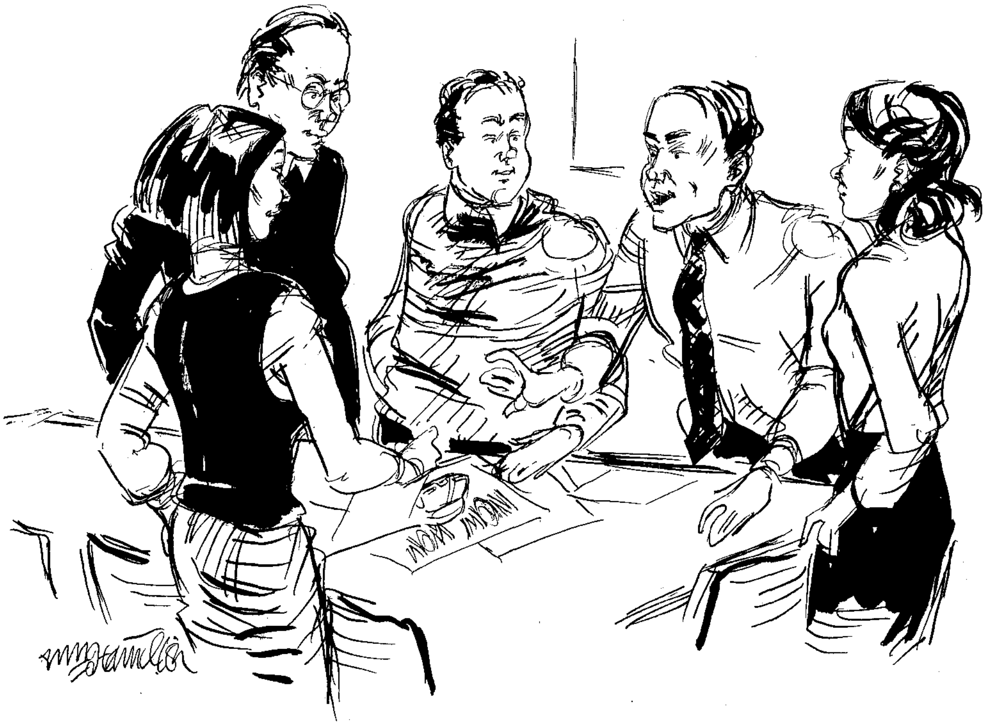
The labor intensity of the worm box has persuaded Shirley not to squander her compost on the trees in Madison Square Park after all. Sometime next month, she plans to go upstate to hunt mushrooms, and she will feed the compost to her country garden.

"Have your worms had babies yet?" we asked.

"That's an impolite question," Shirley said.

"Have the neighbors complained about the flies?"

"Well, not really. Downstairs is a Buddhist temple and upstairs is a Korean whorehouse. They're not the complaining types."



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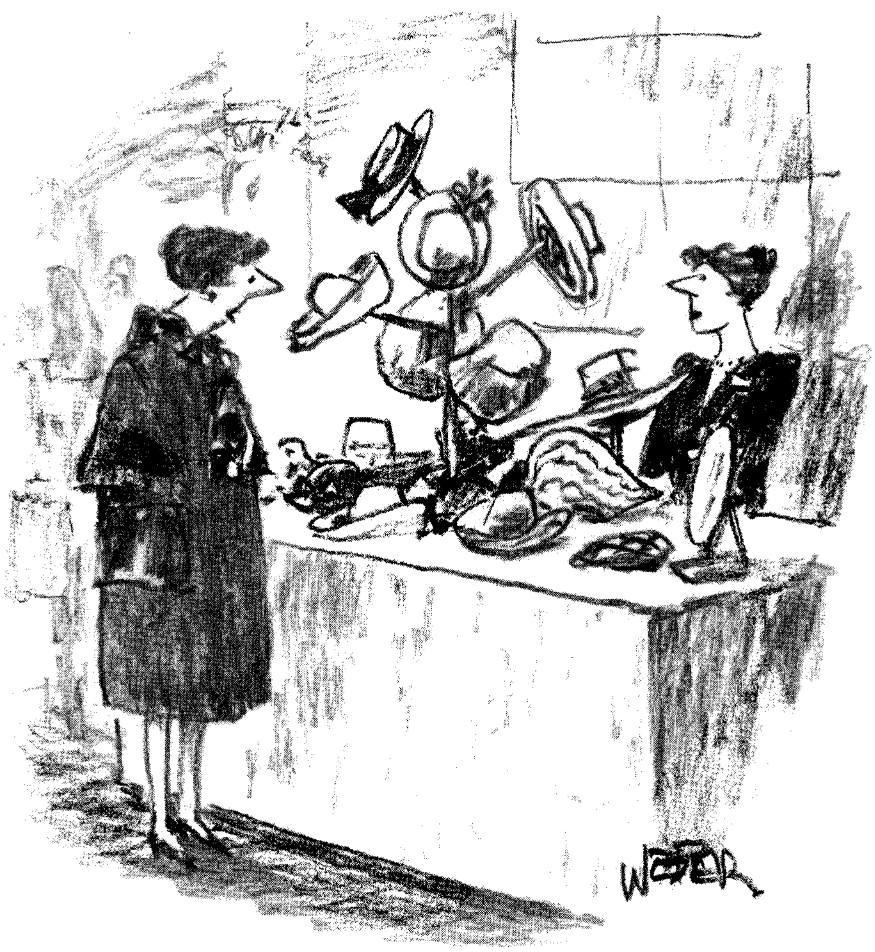
The Allbrook

A HUNDRED and forty thousand dollars will buy many things. At Christie's on a recent Thursday morning, a hundred and forty thousand dollars bought a pair of urinals. "Pair of Urinals," a 1987 sculpture by the thirty-seven-year-old New York artist Robert Gober, consists of two almost identical handwrought urinals. Each measures twenty-one inches by fourteen by seventeen and weighs about forty pounds. Over a skeleton of wood-and-wire lath, layers of plaster create a slightly textured surface. Not as pristine as porcelain, this surface is painted with enamel of a dull off-white. When the urinals are hung according to Gober's specifications—thirty-four inches apart, and each thirty-four inches off the ground—they look like hard-boiled eggs with the yokes scooped out. At the bottom of the cavi-



"What would you recommend for the ozone hole?"

ties, in place of drains, are slight impressions. Except for the absence of plumbing, the urinals when seen from a distance are indistinguishable from those produced industrially.

Urinals are not new to art, of course. In 1917, Marcel Duchamp bought a urinal from the J. L. Mott Iron Works, a New Jersey plumbing manufacturer. He signed it "R. Mutt" and submitted it, under the title "Fountain," to the first exhibition of the American Society of Independent Artists. It was rejected as indecent. Mr. Gober, who at one time made doll houses, is famous mostly for his detailed, full-scale reproductions of sinks, which he places in unexpected contexts. And between 1984 and 1988, in keeping with his plumbing theme, he made four sculptures of urinals.

A few days after the auction, we went over to Christie's and spoke about Gober with Laura Paulson, of the Contemporary Art Department. "If you were on a TV game show and the password was 'Gober,' you'd instantly say 'Sinks,' " she said. "But it's the atypical pieces, such as the urinals, that are more personal, more revealing, and thus attractive to collectors."

Later, we had a phone conversation with both Dr. Norman Stone, a San Francisco psychologist, and his wife, Norah, who were the successful bidders. "I was interested in the sinks, but the ones that have been available just didn't move me," Dr. Stone said. "It's very important to see the work, and be with it. It was just love at first sight. I responded physically. The work is very sensual, and *very* sexy. It becomes magical, mysterious. The anthropomorphic references, in my opinion, are both male and female. These two urinals are very much like breasts—and also, perhaps, the shapes of testicles."

For a broader perspective, we called Piscataway, New Jersey, and spoke with Gary Uhl, who is with the marketing department of American Standard, Inc., the world's largest manufacturers of bathroom fixtures. "The urinal goes back as far as Crete," he told us. "And Crete predated Greece, so we're probably talking as far back as 1500 or 2000 B.C.—I don't know." Mr. Uhl said that American Standard sold over a hundred thousand urinals in 1991, and added, "What we do is an art form—art that we produce in volume. And if we do a good job it's art that people can use and appreciate every day."

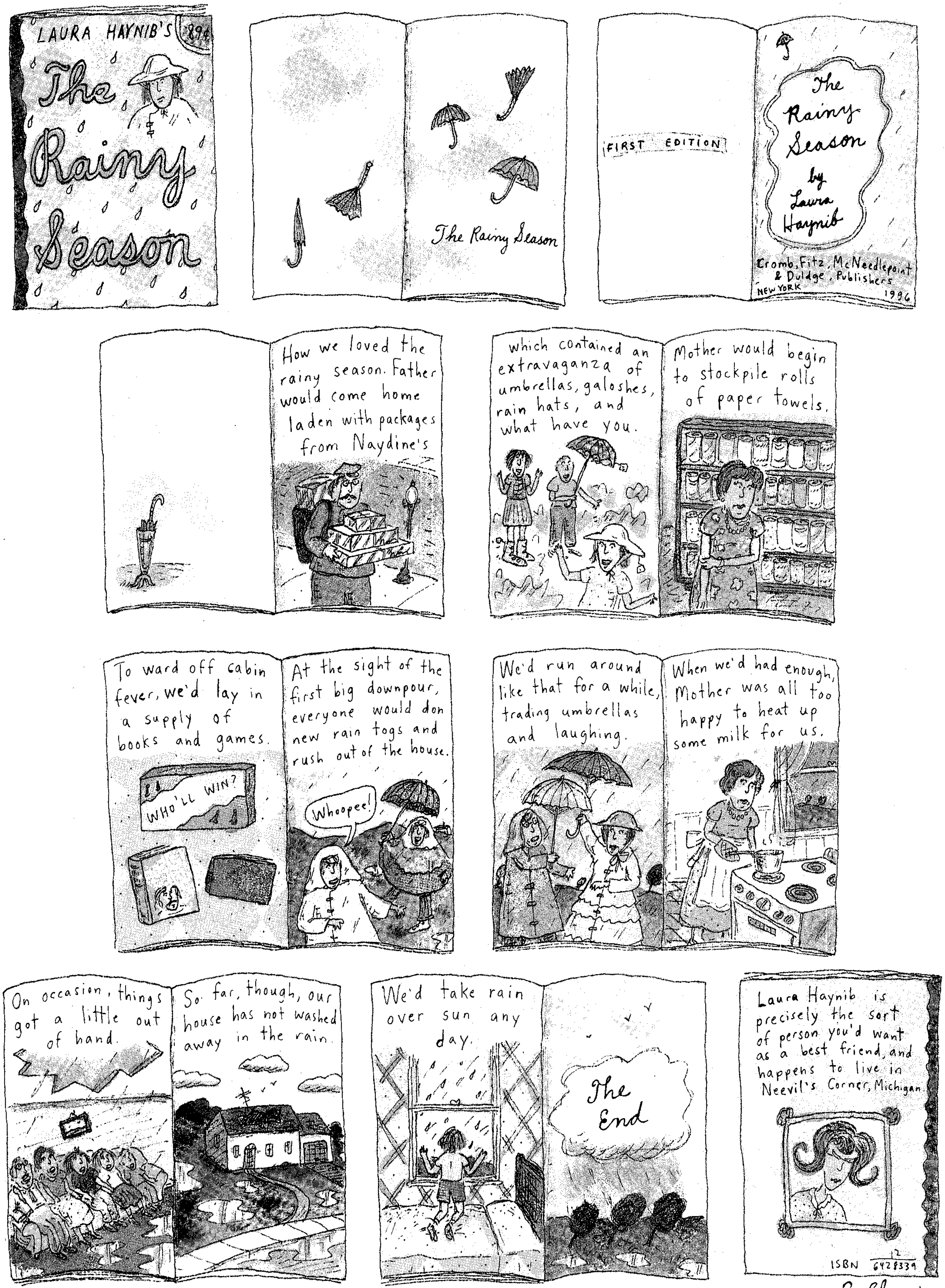
The American Standard catalogue (or "Portfolio of Products," as it's entitled) contains eight models of urinals. One model, No. 6540.017, called the Allbrook, is almost identical to Gober's design. The lower rim is a little less rounded, and the cavity is slightly narrower, but the forms are essentially the same. The Allbrook is described as "a vitreous china water saver (1.5 gallons per flush) siphon jet urinal with flushing rim, 1¼" inlet spud, outlet connection threaded 2" inside, wall hanger," and has a per-unit list price of two hundred and forty-five dollars and ten cents.

"Obviously, I think it's crazy for someone to go out and pay a lot of money for a nonfunctioning duplicate," Mr. Uhl told us. "The Allbrook is a popular model. A classic urinal. It's an example of a good design that has survived time. It could be used anywhere."

Now let's get back to the Stones. "We know exactly where they'll go," Dr. Stone said. "In our home. They will go in the hallway at the top of the stairs—you'll have to walk around to them, the way you would in a men's room. This is a place where they won't be banged into but will still be very prominent."

"I think that urinals have a special significance for women, because they are seldom-seen, forbidden things," Mrs. Stone said. "For a woman to have urinals in her home is really a remarkable experience. We know of a collector in Seattle who recently bought a single Gober urinal. She said she and her husband are putting it in their living room, and she never thought she would see the day she would have a urinal in her living room, but there it is."

Mr. Uhl again. "We would be more than pleased to sell our products to any art gallery, and if we could we'd sell them for the same price that Christie's was able to get for the Gober pair," he said. "We wouldn't have any problem with that."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The Rainy Season
FIRST EDITION
The Rainy Season by Laura Haynib
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How we loved the rainy season. Father would come home laden with packages from Naydine's
which contained an extravaganza of umbrellas, galoshes, rain hats, and what have you.
Mother would begin to stockpile rolls of paper towels.
To ward off cabin fever, we'd lay in a supply of books and games.
WHO'LL WIN?
At the sight of the first big downpour, everyone would don new rain togs and rush out of the house.
Whoopee!
We'd run around like that for a while, trading umbrellas and laughing.
When we'd had enough, Mother was all too happy to heat up some milk for us.
On occasion, things got a little out of hand.
So far, though, our house has not washed away in the rain.
We'd take rain over sun any day.
The End
Laura Haynib is precisely the sort of person you'd want as a best friend, and happens to live in Neevil's Corner, Michigan.
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R. Chast

AUTHORITY FIGURES

I GOT into a certain amount of trouble when I was in high school. I hung around with a bunch of kids mostly from working-class families, and we stole some records and knocked over garbage cans at night and crashed parties and drove too fast and boasted about all of it. I spent a certain amount of time in Yonkers police headquarters, waiting for my father to come and get me and listening as the officer who had caught me uprooting mailboxes or just staggering down the street singing Dion songs expressed surprise that a kid from my background would be involved in this sort of thing and warned that the next time charges might be brought against me. My father was a doctor in Bronxville, a widower, a reserved man who sent me to school across the line in Yonkers because he didn't want me to have things too easy.

This period of my life has risen and fallen in my memory like a tide. When I was thirty it reached flood stage, because I found myself back among adolescent boys—this time as a teacher—and because I was in psychoanalysis, which forced me to return to such autobiographical nexuses like a police dog being repeatedly led back to a particular, suspicious-looking suitcase. When I mentioned this analogy to Dr. Morales—Dr. Ernesto Morales, the brilliantly insane, black-bearded Cuban Catholic psychoanalyst I went to during six of the seven years I taught English at the Coventry School in Manhattan—he said, "Mr. Singer, I am disappointed that after three years of our work together you are still capable of feeling so subservient to me. Now you are a dog and I am leading you around on a lish."

" 'Leash,' " I said, "and you sound more gratified than disappointed."

"And after three years you are also still trying to turn over the table," Dr. Morales said.

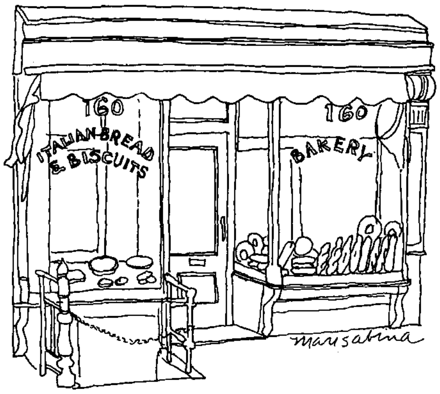
One time, near the end of my wild career, a precinct captain grabbed me by the collar and dragged me from the broken-down bench where I was sitting and into his shabby office and yelled at me for almost half an hour using language so foul that it actually shocked me. He looked electrified with anger, with his short red hair bristling up like a brush, his face red-hot, spit flying. Throughout this horribly exciting castigation, I kept my eyes on a small photograph on the captain's desk, of him and two small red-haired boys, all grinning as if they were plugged in. I wondered whether his wife was red-haired also, and why she wasn't in the picture.

("You were thinking maybe she was dead, too, like *your* mother," Dr. Morales said when I first described this incident to him. He was such a gentle soul.)

I started cutting up partly because I figured if I couldn't have things easy, neither would my father, as if he needed more anguish after the death of my mother, ten years earlier, at the age of thirty-four—a catastrophe that had frozen her into a state of tyrannical beauty and virtue in his mind. But I think I was also trying to shake him loose from the shackles of this tragedy, for my own sake and maybe even for his. So that the clock in the front hall would tick less loudly for him as well as for me. So that he and I might have conversations instead of transactions, so that our fishing trips and family visits might somehow be jolted from duty into comfort. Maybe even so that he might have to find someone to confide in and thereby find his way back to me.

("You know," Dr. Morales said at one point, sounding for a moment more like Emerson than Batista, "duty is not an ignoble motive.")

It didn't work. My father would ask me why I'd done what I'd done and I'd say I didn't know and wait for him to get angry, and I'd feel my isolation grow even greater as weariness rather than rage crossed his face. He would lecture me, perhaps take away my driving privileges or tear up a pair of tickets to a baseball or football game, and that would be that. We'd resume our diplomatic relations. I came to see that my misbehavior and his reaction to it were a distant early warning of the estrangement between us, which deepened when I didn't follow his footsteps through Columbia, when I went out with girls he considered in one way or another unsuitable, when I refused to apply to medical school, when I dodged the Vietnam draft by becoming a teacher, first in a Quaker boarding school in Bucks County and then at Coventry.



And I have to admit that I messed around at least partly just because it was fun, by that hormonally deranged adolescent-boy definition of fun. I remember that I loved to cruise slowly down Central all by myself at three in the morning, half gone on Schaefer beer, and challenge myself to close my eyes for ten seconds. I'd try it. It was exhilarating, it was like being a ghost—it was, in my drunken state, the most fragile, thrilling bliss. I always opened my eyes well before the ten seconds were up. I always stopped short of the disaster I was courting. I never had an accident. And I never got into bad trouble. ("Coming to me was like opening your eyes," Dr. Morales once said. "In both cases, whether you knew it or not, you were about to kill yourself.") Only one or two of my friends sank into grave irresponsibility or outright crime—most went on to be roofers or truck drivers or whatnot, got married young, incurred a family to complain about and to keep them in line. They were smarter than I was—they knew they needed something.

Those were the white boys. I was eighth man on a twelve-man varsity basketball team that consisted of nine black kids and three white kids, and I saw first hand that most of the black kids were truly desperate men in training. All but one were over eighteen, one of them had a chronic ulcer, two were arrested and sent to jail for auto theft, one was expelled in the middle of his senior year for hitting a teacher over the head with a chair, another had had Bell's palsy from the age of fourteen from a knife wound to the face, another told me one night, through streaming tears, when we were drinking in a black bar called Chick 'n' Charlie's, that his father was his uncle: not his mother's husband's brother but his mother's. These kids' insubordination and anarchy were a given in the school—something you could count on—but they all had great respect for our coach, Frank Hayes, an old bald guy from South Carolina who shuffled around scratching his crotch and spoke very quietly. His wife was in a wheelchair ("This is why he scratched his genitals," Dr. Morales said. "Prostatitis or urethritis"), he was going nowhere and had nothing to lose, but he loved the game and he liked the boys and they knew it, and he was philosophical about them.

The start of basketball practice in my fourth year at Coventry got me talking to Dr. Morales about Coach Hayes for the first time—about how kind he was, how pleased when we won, how sympathetic when we lost or screwed up. "We wanted to do well for him," I said. "Even the black kids, who didn't care about anything else." I concluded, "I wish all authority figures were like that."

"No, you do not," Dr. Morales said.

"Of course not," I said. "Please forgive me—I should have known better."

"You have told me more than once how exciting was that policeman's rage, how you hoped for your father's wrath. You wish authority figures to be like the captain, to be like me, to be like this: *Spare me your sarcasm, Mr. Singer!*" Then, resuming his usual oleaginous, insinuating tone, he said, "I am so sorry, but our time for the session is up. I shall see you on Monday."

IT'S funny what happens when you're in psychoanalysis—there are periods when your life takes on the eerie, overdetermined quality of an analytical session, or of the dream you recount in that session. It's as though someone were pulling all the ragged threads of your days into a tight, dark pattern. Conversations echo other conversations, gestures in the present parody gestures from the past, you meet five hairy lawyers the same day, you develop a toothache while watching a movie about a dentist. That's what the next two weeks were like for me.

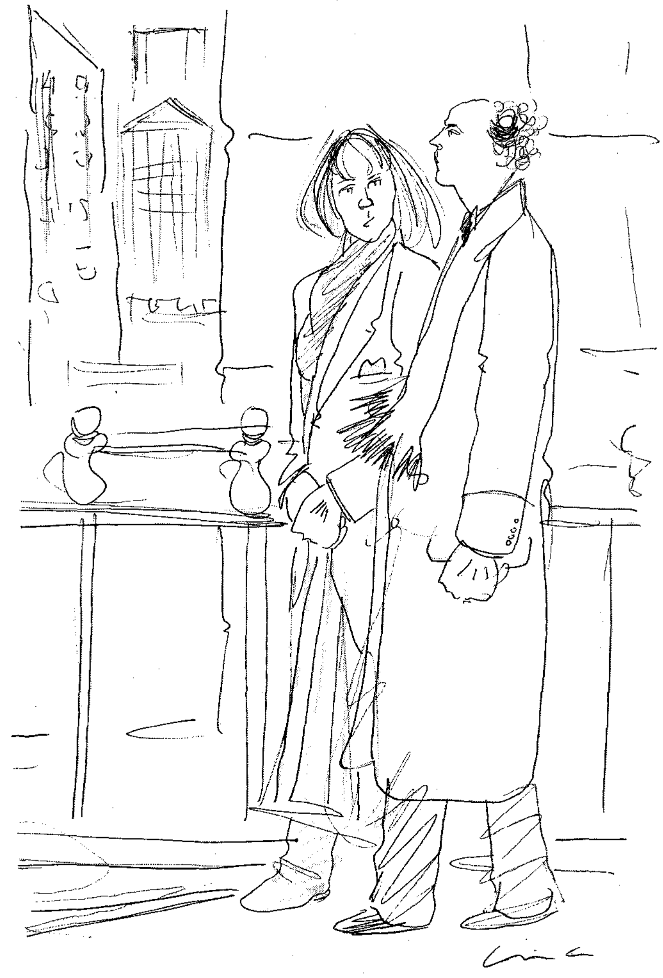
The evening after Dr. Morales's outburst, Coventry played its first basketball game of the season, against Collegiate. On defense, a big Hispanic kid playing center for their team filled the lane like concrete. He could move and jump, too. He was the best high-school basketball player I'd ever seen. At the half, Junior—that's what the other Collegiate players called him—had blocked seven of our shots and had scored twenty-three points. I scrimmaged with the Coventry varsity sometimes, and during games I sat at the end of the bench; from there I always had a good view of our headmaster, W. C. H. Prentice, a few rows back in the stands. And in that game I could see jealousy strike a green spark in his usually dull eyes. Only sports and challenges to his authority—in other words, competition—livened Prentice's expression, and never pleasantly. Well, he could also brim over a little in the presence of any sort of sacrifice for the school—grimaces of pain from a quarterback hobbling off a muddy football field, a notable contribution to the alumni fund.

Our own ace ghetto scholarship ringer, Walter Cooper, was getting pissed off about Junior. I could see it in *his* expression, which generally showed nothing but distrust or dissociation. I could tell he was getting angry by the look of amusement he wore—I'd noticed it when I stole the ball from him in practice or faked him out, and it often preceded an "accidental" trip by him, or an overaggressive screen. Walter was still looking faintly amused as Jim Parietti, the coach, harangued the team at halftime, stupidly singling Walter out for not driving to the basket—as if he could drive, with Junior blocking up the middle.

A few minutes into the third quarter, still wearing that quizzical expression, Walter dribbled the ball into the key, turned and backed into Junior, and wheeled around to shoot, literally under Junior's nose. Another blocked shot, but this time Junior paid for it. Walter's left elbow flew up and hit the other boy very hard beneath the jaw. Something came out of his mouth as he landed, and he sank to his knees with his hands over his face and blood welling through his fingers. What had fallen to the floor turned out to be the front third of Junior's tongue.

In those days, a gung-ho Coventry-alumnus doctor attended our games, and he rushed out onto the court, where Junior remained in an attitude of prayer, and took over. He got the boy up to Columbia-Presbyterian, and I heard later from Ray Soto, who was in one of my English classes and lived near Junior in Spanish Harlem, that they sewed the tongue back on but that part of it became necrotic—"One side rotted out," Ray said—leaving Junior unimpeded in English but a post-traumatic Castilian in Spanish. I don't know how that could be.

When I arrived at the Coventry School, W. C. H.



"What do you think about the concept of a drink together?"

"Hayward and his whole deal have just been dumped in my lap."

Prentice had been headmaster for six years. He came from Scotland and he started at Coventry as a history teacher. Those who ran the school in the mid-sixties, watching in fear and envy as the boys' hair grew longer, their nights later, their ties louder, their test scores lower, and, with increasing frequency, their pupils as wide as pineapple slices, must have liked what they saw in Dr. Prentice, as he insisted on being called. Tall, solid, straight as a post, always dressed in a blazer, white shirt, striped tie, and gray slacks. Bald but with a fringe of close-cropped iron-gray hair. Regular features, ruddy complexion, aristocratic British idiom and accent, with the faintest hint of a burr. Water Closet Head, the boys called him, and there *was* something functional about the way he operated, reflexively snatching baseball caps off the heads of those he caught wearing them indoors, speaking in clipped aphorisms, prescribing fresh air for everything from acne to the death of a parent, taking low comic roles in school plays as if it were a brand-new hilarity every time.

Prentice put me on the Scholarship Committee because I could play basketball. It was O.K. with me. At the age of thirty-one, after three years of teaching and two years of emotional vivisection on the slablike couch of Dr. Morales, I had begun to feel my neurotic despair lighten a bit, but I still had very little in my life besides Dr. Morales and the school, and so I threw myself into teaching like someone who chronically travels in order to avoid being at home. The winter of my third year, I started going up to Harlem and East Harlem and the South Bronx with Parietti to scout the boys who had applied for scholarships. Prentice, like nearly every headmaster in New York of that era, spoke only of moral obligation and democracy as he searched the bare Pine-Solled halls and mean gyms of the understaffed, broken-desk intermediate and high schools up there for kids who would bring his school athletic glory—black and Dominican and Puerto Rican kids who had earned glowing testimonials from their coaches while managing to compile what looked like decent academic records. We'd hunt them up, lure them downtown, grade them easy, and cheer them loudly, and then send them off to college, only to hear, all too often, that they'd dropped or flunked out.

"NATURALLY, we are all concerned about what happened on Saturday night at the game," Prentice said at the next meeting of the Scholarship Committee, the following Tuesday after school. The five of us sat around his baronial mahogany desk, which matched the wainscoting he'd had installed in his huge office. The office was on the top floor and had views north to the George Washington Bridge and west over the Hudson—the whitecaps on this crisp January day looked like sparkling white trim on a vast blue uniform—and to me it all seemed foolishly majestic for a headmaster. "We must give Walter the benefit of the doubt, I think," Prentice continued, "and conclude that the injury was inflicted unintentionally."

"He threw the elbow on purpose, there's no doubt about it," I said.

"We can't know that," Prentice said sharply. His face went a little red.

"I know it," I said. "He sent two kids into the hospital last year, when he was only in the ninth grade."

"They were trying to rob him," someone else said. "It was in the principal's letter."

"His family is all broken apart, his mother is an addict and so is his brother, and he's angry," I said. "That was in his file, too. I think he's a time bomb. He's almost two years older than anyone else in his class—he shouldn't be here."

There was silence for a full thirty seconds. I'd been such a quiet creature for so long—frightened and nervous, except in class, which was the only place I could relax.

"What do you know about it?" Mac Sturgis finally said. He was a math teacher with a trust fund and a yearning to be rough and proletarian. This was the early seventies, so the kids loved him even more than they ordinarily would have for his denunciations of their privileged lives.

"I know a lot," I said. "I went to school with kids like Walter, and I played basketball with them."

"Is that right?" Mac said.

"And I scrimmage with the team

and I guard Walter a lot and he guards me, and I know an elbow like that from him is no accident. Plus he's in my class. And the interview with him last winter—we were all here. If he said six words besides yes and no I didn't hear them."

"Well, of course, I had some reservations about Walter myself," Prentice said.

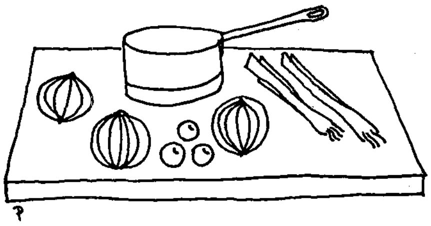
"But don't you remember?" I blurted out. "After the interview you said he was a fine, composed young man and we could offer him an opportunity to rise above his circumstances."

Silence again, this time even louder. Prentice's eyes were blazing. "I did not know I was speaking before the F.B.I.," he said. "Do you fancy yourself some sort of tape recorder, Singer? I said at the time and I say again now that we must watch this boy. In any case, we can't prove malice in what he did in the game, so there's an end to it. Now let us review the applications we've received for admission next fall."

When the meeting was over, Prentice followed me out into the hall. "A word, Mr. Singer," he said, his face still bruised by anger. "I'll thank you not to contradict me in future. I hope you realize you've only made a fool of yourself." He turned on his heel and went back into his palace.

Wednesday morning was brilliant and frigid and very windy. I walked across Central Park over the crackling grass for my appointment with Dr. Morales. Nobody was out but me and a couple of mounted cops, but in my high indignation at Prentice I felt less lonely than I usually did in that lonely place at that lonely time, and I was less mindful than usual of the noise of the traffic circumscribing the Park, less weighted by the memory of the empty quiet of my apartment when I woke up, all the books listing in the shelves, the half-empty closets, the chairs for nobody, the dead gray of the television screen waiting to put in its three hours of bright, useless service that night.

Morales's office looked like steerage in comparison with Prentice's pin-neat captain's quarters. Dust clouded the face of the nurturing mother in the Käthe Kollwitz print that hung on one wall in the waiting room, and dust rendered the streets and buildings in the Utrillo reproduction on another wall even more noncommittal than the artist had managed to make them. The African mask hung off center, the magazines were messed on the nominal coffee table, the philodendron that had replaced the dead cactus on the sill of the gloomy window looked pale and parched. I was a few minutes early, so I went back and forth from the grimy little bathroom with a Dixie cup, and, hissed all the while by the white-noise machine, I watered the plant.



The door from the inner office to the hall opened and closed. The woman who went before me snuffled and blew her nose, as usual, all the way to the coat closet. Was it an allergy, or did she produce tears every time?

Then, as I lifted the philodendron's lower leaves and poured in another cupful of water, the door to the waiting room opened and there was Dr. Morales. His usual lunatic grin of salutation evaporated immediately, and he said, "What are you doing, Mr. Singer?" He stood up straight out of his half bow. His shiny bald head caught a stray piece of light, his thick black

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OFF-SEASON AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD

We have crawled on our fins
from the sea into the sandy sheets
of the Holiday Inn.
How late we are to rise, how civilized,

who put on the furs of animals
against the seasonable chill.
Who walk on two legs down Commercial Street
past the petrified saltwater taffy,

the shops gaily boarded up.
By then it is midafternoon
at the end of the world, near dark,
time for a drink. The nights are long,

these the ones the ancients measured
fourteen fingers deep by water clock.
The room's a postcard, the view a stamp,
the earth just driftwood—

the ancients were right—a slab of wood
adrift in a bowl of dishwater
under an overturned sky.
You empty your pockets:

from a two-fisted hourglass,
a little dune spills on the bed,
the racket immense,
grain against grain, wave after wave.

Parts rubbing each other wrong,
resistance wearing resistance down,
how civil we are to each other,
who have laid bare the law of friction,

skin sliding against skin
slick with the rigors of inventing pleasure.
I love you as I love salt, the ancients said.
Everywhere I lick you, you taste of it.

—Debora Greger

• •

beard glistened, his weight lifter's shoulders bulged out of his pin-striped vest as if inflated.

"Just this," I said. "Just watering this plant. It really needed it."

"I see," Dr. Morales said with Latin menace.

I went into the inner office, with its stalagmites of books and journals, rudimentary bookshelves, a desk covered with papers, and the dull brass crucifix on the wall behind Dr. Morales's chair, and I lay down on the couch. Dr. Morales came over and sat down, still looking—the last glimpse I had of him—taken aback. Jesus! Water a plant and cause an earthquake!

I told him in detail about the Scholarship Committee meeting—he already knew about Junior's tongue, because I'd described what had happened in the game during our Monday session. "What a hypocrite!" I concluded, about Prentice. "He took this kid for his shooting percentage and made believe it was for his sake, and now he's claiming that he knew it was a high risk all along and said so. And then he gets furious at me for telling the truth."

"It's outrageous," Dr. Morales said, his accent lending the "e" in that word a prominence it seldom enjoys. "I do not understand—"

"He's a bully—that's all. He doesn't have an ounce of self-awareness."

"You are in great style this morning, Mr. Singer," Dr. Morales said. "Your phrases are so exact and perfect—filled with measurements, eh? High risks, shooting percentages, ounces of awareness."

"Well, I guess I'm just trying to be emphatic—I guess I'm still angry."

"It is quantitative analysis with regard to the character of the headmaster, but you have only guesswork to offer about yourself. How many times must I tell you—*no guesses!*"

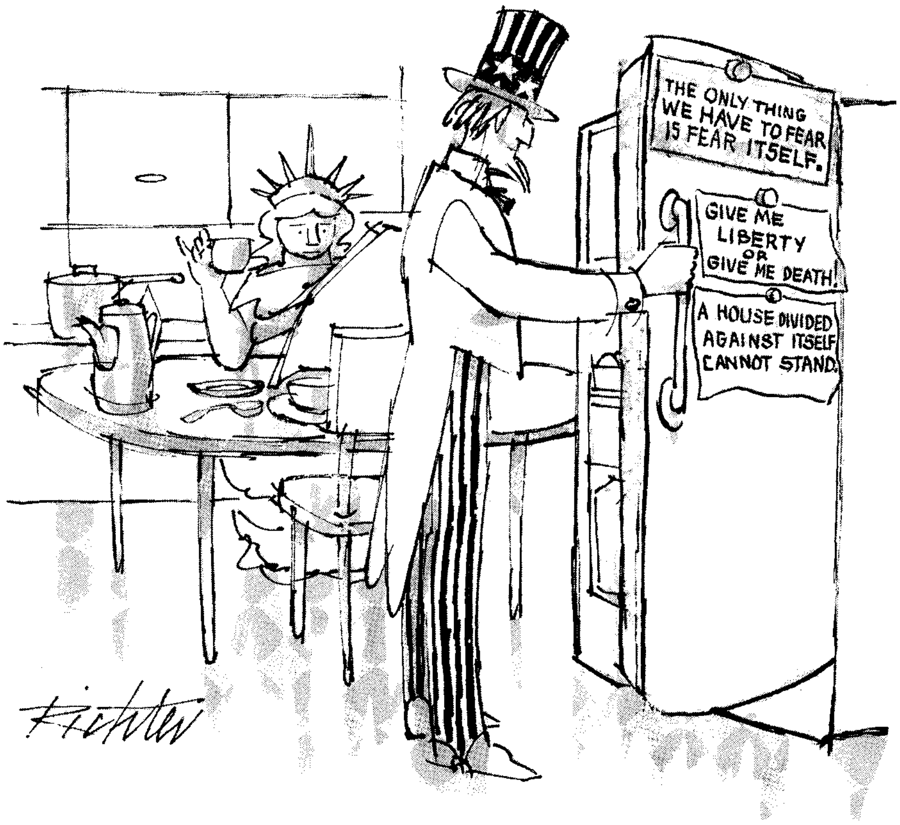
"What are *you* so pissed off about—that I watered your plant? You looked like the sky was falling when you opened the door."

"Now it makes sense to me, however. After your history lesson to the headmaster yesterday you are correcting my horticulture today."

"But you agreed with me that the way he acted was outrageous."

"No."

"No?"


THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO FEAR IS FEAR ITSELF.
GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH!
A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND.
Richter

"No. I was about to say that I do not understand how *you* could behave in so outrageous a fashion and expect anything but fury in return."

"*Me*?"

"But I am so glad that your further adventures in arithmetic kept me from saying this lie, because I do actually understand."

"*I* was outrageous?"

"It amazes me that you were not fired on the spot. I would have fired you without hesitation."

"Consider me fired," I said, getting up from the couch. I turned to face him. "Why is it that every time I think I'm getting somewhere you have to pull the rug out from under me?"

"Because that is the way you insist upon seeing the help I am trying to give you," Dr. Morales replied.

"You are a God-damned sadist," I said.

Dr. Morales rose out of his chair. His notebook fell to the floor, and I saw his fists clench at his sides as he leaned toward me, and I suddenly had a vision of myself walking down a hallway as long as my life, going from office to office, provoking and then enduring the wrath of one non-native martinet after another. I took a step backward.

Dr. Morales straightened up and plastered his grin back on. "Do not get your hopes up," he said. "I am not going to satisfy your great wish for me to hit you." Then he shouted: "For the good Christ's sake, Mr. Singer, do you need so badly to hear me say that I love you?"

"That you *love* me?"

"I do of course love you, Mr. Singer," Dr. Morales said, lowering his voice into weariness. He sat down in his chair as if depleted. "Now will you be still and listen?"

I lay back down on the couch.

"Baboons," said Dr. Morales.

"Baboons?"

"Yes, baboons. Humans in any enterprise have practical business to accomplish, it is true. The household must function, the company's business must go forward, the magazine must be published, the rocket ship must be lownched—"

"Launched."

"*Lawn*ched. In the case of your school, the children must be taught, the sports played, et cetera." Four very separate syllables. "But this whole time we are primates, with hierarchies and the rituals of behavior, the metaphorical grooming and aggression, et cetera. Only in true intimacy may we abandon these forms and conventions. Very important is the mounting behavior. You see it most, um—how does one say it?—flamboyantly in baboons. The dominant males may—indeed, they must—mount not only the females but the lower males. The lower males must proffer their colorful buttocks or risk a drubbing and perhaps even becoming a pariah. So in our organizations we have a figurative mounting behavior like this. If a lower male wishes to challenge for leadership, he must do it with cunning and patience, not with direct defiance, unless the leader has become so decrepit that he cannot establish physical dominance."

"Asses, apes, and dogs," I said.

"So the headmaster's convenient memory and his reprimand of you are mounting behavior, Mr. Singer. He is fucking you in the ass, and you must, as it were, stand still for it. In the English public schools, the masters would cane the nowty boy and the nowty boy would have to say, 'Thank you, sir, may I please have some more?,' is it not? But in this meeting, just as the headmaster has gotten astride you you turn around and punch him in the face."

"Yes, but what about the truth? I mean, we're not baboons, and Prentice did say—"

"We are coming to the end of our time, Mr. Singer. We shall continue our conversation on Friday. It is bad technique but I tell you now anyway that (a) in such situations establishing what you so comfortably call the truth will serve no purpose that I know of beneath the sun, and (b) your anger at this man is, like your chronic anger at me, acting out old conflicts. This we have discussed before. You should be at this point mastering these conflicts, instead of continuing to seek shelter in them from the professional success you might so easily attain and an emotional life in the now and here."

"You believe I could easily—"

"I shall see you on Friday, Mr. Singer."

I walked out in a daze.

I DIDN'T see Dr. Morales on Friday. Or the following Monday or Wednesday. I was in Columbia-Presbyterian hospital myself, recovering from a knife wound in my side and a nicked kidney. Hospitalization—finally an excuse so pure that even Dr. Morales will have to accept it at face value, I tried to tell myself for a second or two after waking up in severe pain and realizing where I was. Only then did it occur to me to remember what had happened.

We had lost our second basketball game, to Trinity, 76–75. Walter Cooper played extremely well, scoring twenty-two points, with eight assists and eight rebounds, but the Trinity team had a balance that we lacked. Walter put us ahead 75–74 with a strong drive with fifteen seconds to go, but Trinity came back with another basket just before time ran out. Parietti started screaming at Walter before the buzzer stopped sounding. "Ten more seconds!" he yelled. "You hold the ball for ten more seconds, like I told you, and they don't get it back."

I got up from my end of the bench and tried to quiet Jim down. "Come on, we might not have gotten a decent shot if he'd waited that long."

"It's called following orders, Cooper," Parietti said. "It's called playing as part of a team."

"Hey, he had eight or nine assists, Jim, and—"

"I wanted that clock down to five seconds or less, like I told you."

So it went—off the court, across the hall, into the locker room, all the way through Walter's shower. Even after that, Parietti couldn't leave him alone, and kept circling back around to him as he was getting dressed.

Facing his locker, with his back turned toward the coach, Walter took a knife out of his jeans front pocket and opened it. Parietti couldn't see it. It had a small hilt, like an old-fashioned dagger.

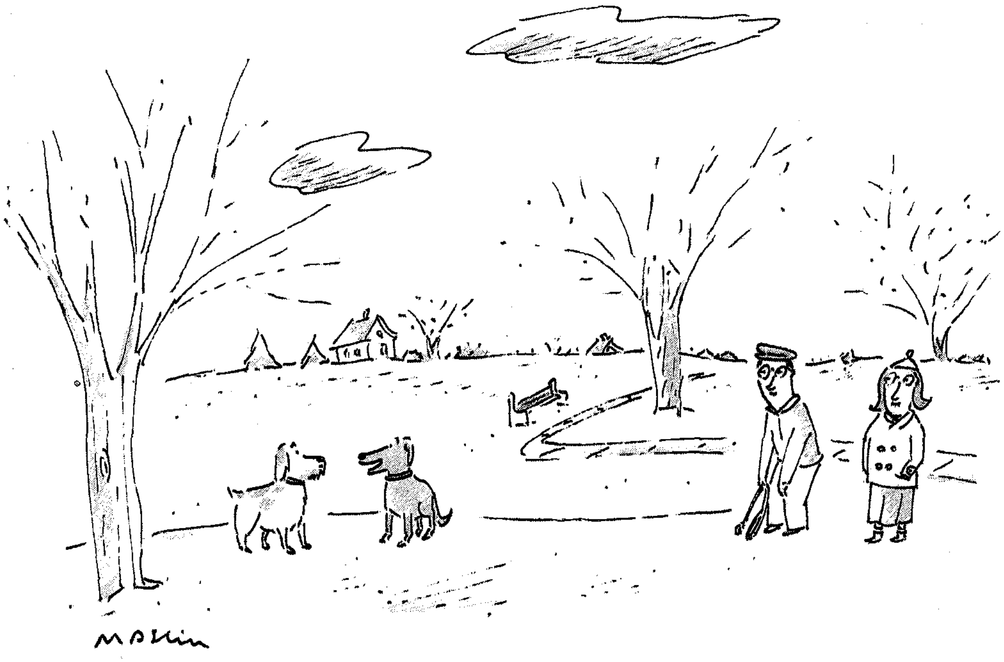
I rushed over and stepped between them. "O.K., Walter," I said. "He doesn't know what he's talking about."

"Who the hell asked you, Singer, you skinny fuck?" Parietti said. "I thought I was the coach here."

Walter turned around and faced me, wearing that mild look of amusement. "Walter, he does this all the time," I said. "You don't have to pay any attention."

"You're good," Walter said. He stepped forward and pushed the knife at me. I tried to dodge down and away from it, but he caught me in the side and I was hung up on the knife for a couple of seconds. Where the knife went in, my body felt strange or even dead to me—like something that *should* be cut, like insulation, or bread, or a sack of grain.

Walter pulled the knife out and I fell to the floor. I looked up and saw Parietti with his mouth finally shut—well, open but with no words coming out. Walter put the knife down on the bench



"I'd better run—they're expecting me back at work."

beside him and walked out of the locker room. He never went home, Prentice told me when he came to visit me in the hospital. He was never arrested, never even found.

I lay there trying to hold my side together, my hands greasy with blood, feeling shock descend on me like a chilly mist. Luckily, the gung-ho medical alumnus was in the locker room, as he usually was, trying to relive his high-school years, or just—it occurred to me a few seconds before I passed out—being gay.

"And—good news—it's black tie."

PRENTICE arrived at the hospital on Saturday evening, forty-eight hours after I was admitted and just a few minutes after my first visitor, Mac Sturgis, who had evidently been impressed by the hint of hard knocks in my youth, had left. Prentice's outfit made a single concession to the weekend—no tie—and he stood stiffly near my bed for the quarter of an hour he was there. He started off calling me Jacob, which was a first for him, and then outdid himself and called me Jake—incessantly. "That was a brave thing you did, Jake," he said, after telling me that no trace of Walter had been found.

"Thanks," I said. I shifted in bed and felt a jolt of pain where the wound was. "There must have been a better way to handle it." I had already begun to anticipate Morales's dissection of my motives. "I should have just shouted a warning or something."

"I have always had some questions about Mr. Parietti's demeanor with the players."

"But you— Most of them know how to just put up with it."

"I've been meaning to say, Jake, that the incident in the committee meeting last week was most unfortunate. I hope that these unpleasant incidents won't affect your work. I suspect that you don't quite realize how much the boys admire you. But now you must see about getting well. Fresh air will help, Jake—as soon as you're up to getting around a bit."

"Yes, thanks," I said. "The doctors say I'll be fine. If you have a chance, would you tell my senior section they should finish reading 'Billy Budd' next week."

"Of course, of course," Prentice said, as if he were paying not the slightest attention. I looked at him and saw that his eyes were moist with tears. Mine filled, too, God help me. He put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Jake, what you did was probably impulsive, but I also maintain that you were very courageous." There was a little extra burr in those last three words, like the faint skirl of the bagpipes.

"WHY are you so scornful of someone who is praising you?" Morales asked when I mentioned the thickening of Prentice's accent. "Perhaps it is because he appears to be more astute about your character than you might wish to acknowledge."

"Praise," I said.

"If you feel that your wownd will excuse you from answering that question, maybe you would address this one: Did you believe when you interposed yourself in this situation that you were Ruby Goldstein?"

God, he knows boxing, too, I said to myself. "No," I said aloud, "I didn't think I was Ruby Goldstein. I thought that Walter and I understood each other and that I'd get him to put the knife down. That's all."

"I'm sad to say that it is never all, Mr. Singer. I am also sorry about your injury and I know these questions are hard for you to answer at this time, but I must ask you what you believed the blood that you were so eager to shed would purchase for you."

"Well, I hardly planned it, but it seemed to earn me Prentice's affection, at least until the next time I cross him."

"You will not cross him again."

"Is that a prediction or an order?"

Dr. Morales was silent. I rolled onto my side and looked at him. "Is that a guess or an order or a prediction or a hope?" I said. "And by the way, you did want to hit me last week. You almost did. Your fists were clenched."

"My fists were not clenched, Mr. Singer."

I turned again onto my back. "Your fists were clenched, and that's that," I said. Why did this item of truth suddenly seem crucial? There was a silence, and then I went on: "When Walter stabbed me, he said, 'You're good.' And just before I passed out I was thinking how weird it was."

"Even in extremis," Dr. Morales said, "you were intellectualizing."

Silence again.

"Well?" Dr. Morales said.

"Well what?"

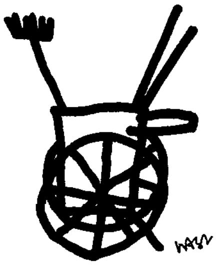
"What do you think he meant?"

"He was about three inches away from me," I said. "It seemed so—I don't know—confidential, or intimate. It reminds me of something that happened to me when I was in high school, but I'm not sure why."

"Perhaps when you have completed this preamble we might discover the answer together."

"Give me a second, will you? I'm trying to remember this specific thing. The rest of it we've been over a million times."

The rest of it was this: In the middle of my senior year, just after the police captain yelled at me, I quit fooling around. It wasn't fun anymore, I told myself, and it didn't give me whatever else it was that I hoped to gain from it. Near the beginning of this reformation there was a basketball game against Bronxville High, in which I got a lot of playing time and did extremely well—better than ever before or after. I was put in at the end of the first quarter to give a rest to Marvin White, one of our guards, and I stayed in the game until the end and scored twenty-four points and blocked some shots and had a lot of assists. And I scored the winning basket, with less than ten seconds left on the clock. I played out of my mind, actually. I scored on a fifteen-foot left-handed hook shot. I scored while I was falling on my ass five feet beyond the key after some hatchet man had given me a vicious elbow to the ribs. I out-rebounded guys a foot taller than me. I was eight for eight from the line.



"Here's the part I'm just now remembering," I said to Dr. Morales. "We won by two points at the last minute against the rich kids, so the locker room was sort of delirious when the game was over. Everyone was joking around in the shower. The guard I'd replaced, Marvin, had come back in at the other guard position in the second quarter, and in the shower he came up to me and put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'Jake, man, see what you can do when we decide to help a white boy out?' I said something like 'I just brought you guys up to my level for once, that's all,' and he said, 'No, Jake, you're good, now that we have taught you how to play this game.' I told him I just hadn't wanted to show him—"

"Excuse me, Mr. Singer, but you do realize that this boy used the same words as Walters—'You're good,' no?"

"No. I mean yes. I mean I didn't realize it."

"When you were in the shower these many years ago, your teammate was saying, 'You are all right—you can be in this disreputable athletic club, at least temporarily,' yes?"

"Yes, but—"

"And Walters was initiating you into the other club, as it were. To him you were, if I may use your phrase, an authority figure, whether you want to be one or not, whether you want to act like one or not. By the way, both incidents contain latent homosexual elements, of course, but we shall save that—"

"Oh, please."

"Have you not said how intimate you felt just before Walters stabbed you? And this other boy has put his hand on you in the shower, yes?"

"Yes, but—"

"You should apply for a patent on those two syllables, Mr. Singer. We shall save this homosexual material for another time. If you will permit me now to continue: You see, you are reaching the stage in your life when you must decide how you are going to act, whether you are going to conduct yourself in a mature fashion, with all the compromises this entails, or turn into an anachronism, an angry teenager in the clothing of an adult, offended by, rather than sad about, your mother's death. Because, you see, if you insist upon reënacting these habitual conflicts and reacting to those in positions of maturity and authority with defiance and rage, this immaturity will inhibit you from . . ."

Usually Dr. Morales's language flowed with such strong currents of zeal and fanaticism and hostility that I found myself tossed along on them like a cork, but sometimes even he subsided into tedium. This was one of those times. I stopped listening and started watching a surreal scene that my mind had evidently decided to compose. In this vision, my father, dressed in hospital greens, stood in front of the high mahogany doors of a private mansion. On the lintel above these doors were polished-brass letters spelling out "Sceptre." The "S" was askew. Battalions of fleecy clouds floated in the sky, sunbeams like long ingots of light shone down, and the air was filled with the sound of a symphony orchestra playing major triads. Up the flagstone walk leading to the mansion, flanked by formal French gardens and straight rows of palm trees, strode Dr. Morales, dressed in a white suit and smoking a Havana. My father and he gave each other the club handshake and grinned at each other like little boys with a secret, and then the doors swung open and Dr. Morales entered the mansion. Prentice came up next, in a kilt, playing "The Skye Boat Song" on a set of pipes. He walked in the slow, stately gait of the military piper. He said "Fresh air" to my father, and my father opened the door for him. Next was the Yonkers police captain, wearing his dress uniform and trying to suck in his sizable portico. He flashed his badge and was shown in. Coaches Hayes and Parietti were next. They did a pick-and-roll around my father and went on in, too. And here I came up the walk, dragging my feet. My father turned away from me with an unhappy, uncertain expression. Dr. Morales came back out of the mansion and cheerfully waved me forward. I wanted to run away but I kept shuffling—

"What are you thinking about, Mr. Singer?"

"*Our* club," I said. "I wonder what happened to Marvin and those other guys. And what about Walter?"

"What about him?"

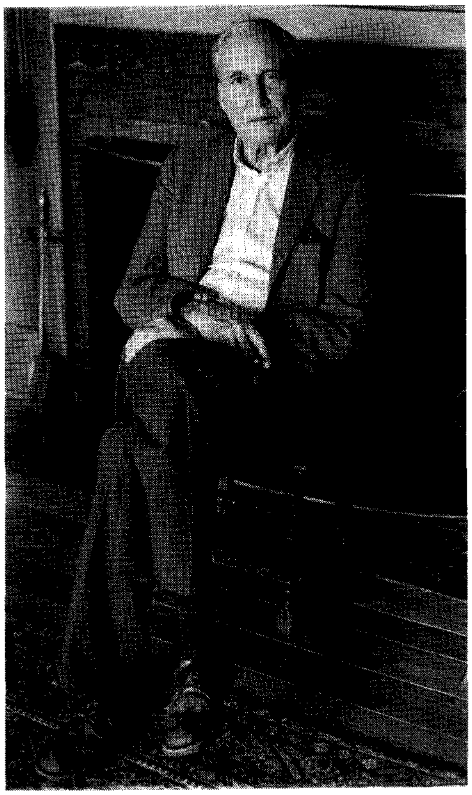
"Well, is anyone going to help him?"

"Who cares?" Dr. Morales said.

—DANIEL MENAKER

PROFILES

JAZ



Photograph by Virginia Schendler

JAMES LAUGHLIN'S roots, which over the years he has tried to pull up, are in Pittsburgh, but these days the dimensions of his life resemble those of a hand-drawn map on the flyleaf of a storybook. What the map mostly shows is northwest Connecticut, where Laughlin's landmarks are Robin Hill, a mansion that belonged to his aunt Leila Laughlin Carlisle; Meadow House, a big white clapboard house that Aunt Leila built for him and where he has lived for almost half a century; and the post office and news store in the center of Norfolk, a mile away. Near the southern edge of this map is the New York office of the New Directions publishing company, which Laughlin founded in 1936, and farther west, rarely visited, is Pittsburgh, where the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation, founded by his great-grandfather, was until 1978 one of the four largest steel companies in the United States. On the western edge is Alta, Utah, where Laughlin is chairman of the board of the Alta Ski Lifts Company, which runs what many consider to be the premier skier's mountain in the United States. On the eastern edge is India, where in the fifties he spent the better part of five years working for the Ford Foundation. As is usual on such maps, there are blackened-in patches, declivities that might well be marked with danger flags signalling trouble—in this case his own, and the troubles of people he has loved.

Laughlin's conversation moves among these landmarks like a high-speed model train. Chief among the human inhabitants of his mental landscape are the writers he has published, befriended, and argued with since he founded New Directions, and predominant among these is Ezra Pound, Laughlin's personal daemon. It's almost impossible to have a conversation of any length with Laughlin in which Pound doesn't figure. William Carlos Williams, Delmore Schwartz, Thomas Merton, and Tennessee Williams also loom large.

For years, Laughlin has written voluminous letters to a legion of correspondents, including a phalanx of young women who have found themselves enamoured of him. Laughlin has been married three times, the first time in 1942, to Margaret Keyser, of Salt Lake City, with whom he had two children, Paul and Leila. They were divorced in 1952. In 1956, he married Ann Resor, whose father, Stanley Resor, built up the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency. Laughlin and Ann had two sons, Robert and Henry. Ann Laughlin, who was ten years her husband's junior, died of bone cancer in 1989, and last year Laughlin married Gertrude Huston, whom he had dated between his first two marriages, and who had designed books for New Directions in the seventies.

"I used to write long letters baring my soul," Laughlin said one day during the summer as he took some large letterpress books from the shelf of his study at Meadow House and ran his fingers over the bindings. The books, some of which were printed especially for him at the Officina Bodoni, in Verona, are editions of works by authors New Directions discovered and/or fostered: Ezra Pound's "Cavalcanti"; "I Rise in Flame, Cried the Phoenix," by Tennessee Williams; "Twenty-six Poems," by Dylan Thomas. "But now everyone gets terse little letters," he went on, "because I have to go over the mistakes with a little white paintbrush. Many of the writers I am closest to have died. That's the sadness of old age, finding that a rodent is in there, eating your thoughts."

A conversation with Laughlin is like a card game in which the deck is shuffled and reshuffled: you never know which card is coming up. Next he said, barely pausing, "Maybe Alice is the mouse. I've always felt a great affinity with those people who want to know what color dress Alice B. Toklas wore. She had a great hunger. She was in a certain way more intelligent than Gertrude Stein, who twisted knowledge to suit her own megalomaniac purpose. But if an arrow misses the bull's-eye, it should look for the cause in itself. That's what Pound used to say. It was on a poster he put up in Rapallo during the war." He looked down at the book in his hand and turned the thick pages to show me the printing. "This is a beautiful book," he said, "but the problem with beautiful books is that you don't *read* them."

Laughlin is seventy-seven now, and his face, preternaturally unlined, is not very much changed from the Roman profile photographed by Man Ray in the forties. His eyes are a mild, unclouded April blue. The left one is amblyopic, meaning that there is a failure in a nerve connection. When he was a boy, his parents brought him to Sir Claude Worth, King George V's doctor, in an unsuccessful effort to have it corrected. Generally, Laughlin looks at you when he speaks or answers a question, and, depending on the subject, his gaze is ironic or appraising. He is six feet five, but the impression he gives is of length, not height: he has the long, long legs of an excellent cross-country skier, which he was until just a few years ago. He also has the look some very tall, rangy people have of having been strung together by a Coppelius. In his case, because of skiing accidents, this is almost literally true. At eighteen, racing on Mt. Washington, he broke what he refers to as "all the processes in the spine"; a second racing accident, in Australia, gave him a broken collarbone; and in two separate skiing accidents Laughlin first broke one and then the other wrist.

He sometimes shakes when he stands now, especially if he is meeting someone new or speaking in public. The shaking is a tremor brought on by the lithium he takes to control the cycles of his manic depression, which was passed on to him as part of his inheritance from his father and grandfather. The lithium does not suppress the secondary symptoms of the illness, which for Laughlin include bouts of nervousness and nausea. These began, he says, when his third child, Robert, ran away from school, and were a result of his sense that a situation for which he felt chiefly responsible was spiralling beyond his capacity to control it. Family friends say that Robert had always seemed disturbed. In 1985, at the age of twenty-seven, after a life of fits and starts, Robert killed himself in the bathroom of the apartment his parents kept in New York, on Bank Street. In part because of Laughlin's symptoms, it was Ann Laughlin who gave herself over to Robert's illness, and in 1987, in order to educate others about manic depression, she produced a documentary film about the disease and its treatment.

"Pound was manic," Laughlin said recently. "My situation was very much like Ezra's. He had this tremendous zip, and the depressed side didn't come out until he went into the hospital. I don't remember depression when I was younger, but I certainly had mania! Now I run in long cycles. When I'm in normal condition, I leap out of bed, but now I don't really steam until late at night. For me, it's as if I busted my back. There are so many concoctions that they dream up now, people need not suffer endlessly. They needn't have what my father was subjected to—that bathtub with the canvas cover."

Laughlin paused for a moment and lit his pipe. "Robert was a beautiful child, but he was possessed by demons," he said. "They say that in the Bible, and it's true. It hit my father at sixty, and my grandfather at sixty-five, and this gave me a sense of urgency to do what I wanted to do. They didn't have a name for it then, though, and it was often miscast as schizophrenia. All I knew about my grandfather was that he lived in Florida in a house separate from his family, with someone to take care of him. My uncle Jimmy Laughlin was crazy, too. The family always claimed he had invented FM radio but had forgotten to patent it. It was perfectly clear in my father's case. I don't know about my brother. He was the last Laughlin to work at J. & L., and while you can say people drink because they're depressed, I don't think I could pin it down—that he 'had it.' I think he drank because he was bored."

WRECKAGE AT LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN

Baton Rouge to New Orleans, hauling I-10, the workweek
done, flying home with old tunes booming,
road jolts, shaken by the bodies,
I come into the room of a long wood quiet as a parlor.

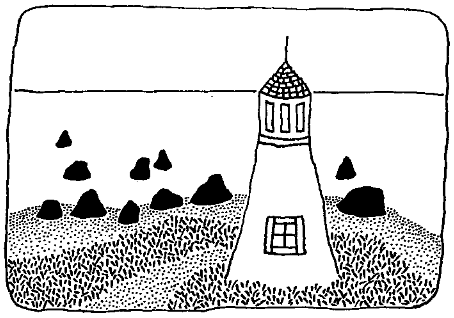
Wisps of moss like an elder's beard. I fly by two snug
grandmothers in a Chrysler. Miles later
I'm shamed by the glance of their
pouchy lipsticked fear, a melted look I see some dawns.

Whose is that law of the eyes? I turn loud "Go Johnny Go,"
pop a beer, grin. Then I slow down to watch
the insweeping lake, a carpet
stinky and black giving under its crane stepping ashore.

—Dave Smith

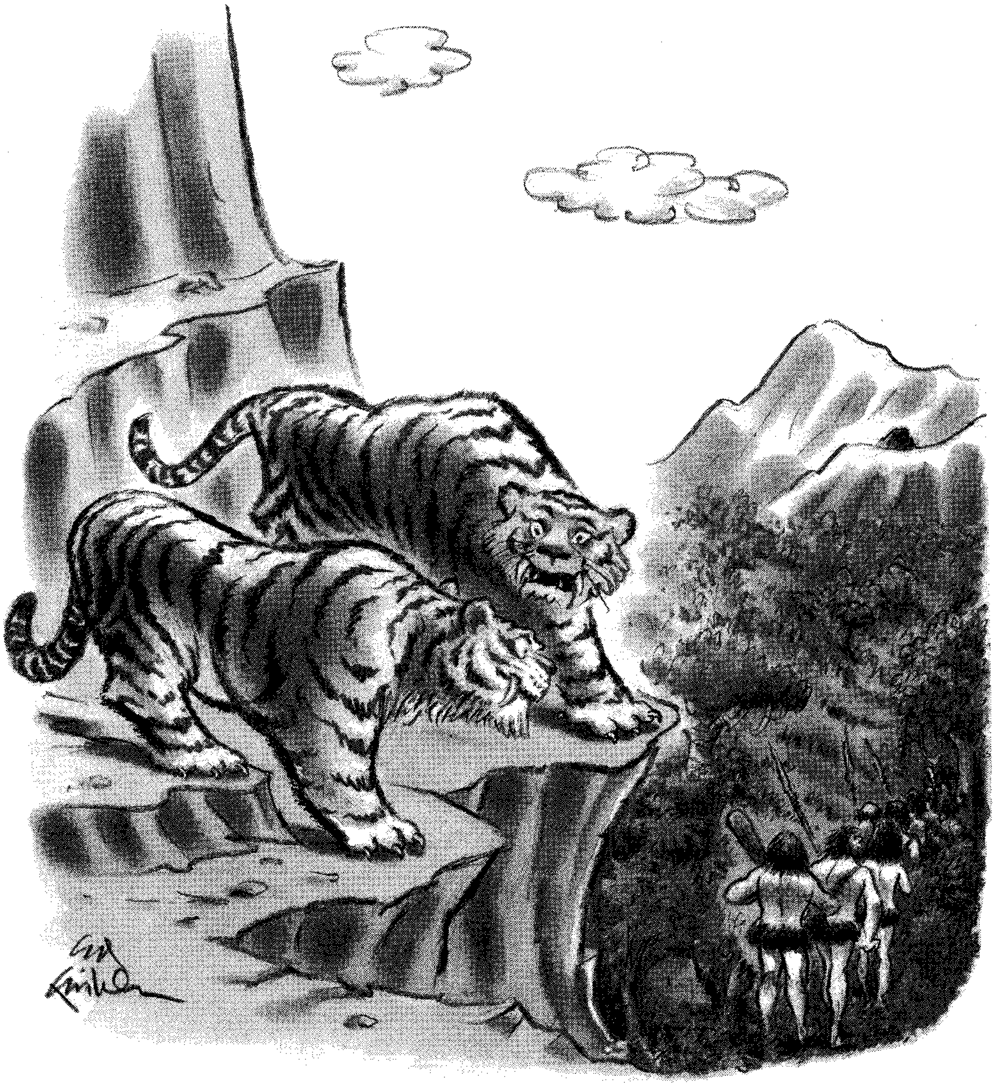
• •

Laughlin's voice rarely changes pitch, and it is distinguished, no matter the topic, by what Brendan Gill, his neighbor in Norfolk, calls "a note of raillery." It is the peculiarly American mix of high and low diction that Pound used in his Cantos, and a speciality of it, in Laughlin's conversation with women, is the glancing compliment. He also makes free use of the lingo of the nineteen-thirties. "He uses it deliberately," Gill says. "The word 'dandy,' for example. It keeps everyone at a distance."



To himself and to most of his friends, Laughlin is known as J—written with no period and no vowels, as if he himself were a letter, floating near the center of the alphabet. In the earliest New Directions books, there is a note below the publishing data that says, "New Directions Books are published for James Laughlin IV at Norfolk, Connecticut." "That was personal ego," Laughlin says now. "But I also have a strong family concept of how we have to make up for being in the steel wars. I wanted to show that there was something more left in the family—that something was being carried on in a strong, constructive way. A great-aunt of mine married Henry Clay Frick, who broke up the Homestead Strike. He brought in Pinkerton guards. He was a nasty man. They were all rough customers, and the steel business was the conjury of these successful, rather ruthless men who made up the powerful families of Pittsburgh. They all knew that God wanted them to make money, and that making money was a virtue. The actual managers were very proud of the steel—it was of good quality. The family cared about the money. I wanted New Directions to go a little way to redeem the family in their dullness and sordidness, in their search for money. The numeral was for my father's sake—he had a strong dynastic sense. In my grandfather's day, there was a racketeer publisher who would go around to the Pittsburgh bourgeoisie and give them coats of arms. The one he gave my family my father called 'The Dog with the Sore Foot.' "

Out in Utah, many of Laughlin's skiing friends call him Jim; Ezra Pound called him Jaz; and Frances Steloff, the founder of the Gotham Book Mart, who was one of the earliest champions of New Directions, called him Jamesie. "She believed in the transmigration of souls," Laughlin says. Laughlin himself semi-seriously entertains an idea that he may be a reincarnation of Sextus Propertius, whose family's land was taken away in the first century B.C. and given to the veterans of the civil wars, and who later surfaced in Rome as a poet. "This was a constant subject of Pound's," Laughlin says. "But then he would say, 'But, Jaz, if Propertius had Rip-van-Winkled he wouldn't be editor of Nude Erections!' "



"They're such cute little animals I hate to hunt them. But if we don't thin out their numbers they'll simply starve themselves out of existence!"

JAMES LAUGHLIN IV was born on Woodland Road, in the Squirrel Hill district of Pittsburgh, on October 30, 1914, to Henry Hughart Laughlin and Marjory Rey Laughlin. There were twenty-seven families on the street who were related to him by blood or marriage. In most of the houses in the neighborhood, cheesecloth was put up in the windows to keep out the soot from the steelworks, and it was changed daily. His maternal grandfather, William Holdship Rey, had his own company, called Robinson-Rey; he was a steel jobber and sold the steel made in Pittsburgh to customers in Cleveland and Detroit. The Reys had served in the Revolutionary War. Laughlin's father's family came from Portaferry, Ireland, where their position as Protestants and as small farmers had made their life a double hardship. With his brother Henry, Laughlin's great-grandfather James arrived in Philadelphia in 1824. The brothers bought a wagon and a load of rough crockery and sold it off as they drove west. In Pittsburgh, James Laughlin started a general store; after a decade, the store became a bank. His great-grandson was always told that it was the first national bank in the country. "I don't know if that was true," Laughlin likes to say, "but he certainly was a hardworking man."

By 1855, James Laughlin had met an iron puddler named Jones, and, impressed with his success, he heavily invested the bank in Jones' already existing iron business, with an eye to setting up his five sons. The business was then called Jones, Lauth & Company, and it covered one and a half acres in Pittsburgh, on the south side of the Monongahela River. The output of iron was seven tons per day, on one shift, and in 1854 the company had recorded a profit of two thousand dollars for the previous year. For the first fifteen years of the Laughlins' involvement in iron and then steel, the combined income of the various companies in which they came to hold stock was a little over a million and a half dollars, almost all of which was reinvested. By 1904, under the financial leadership of James Laughlin, Jr., Laughlin's grandfather, the company had brought its capacity up to over a million tons of metal annually. Three years after that, the company broke land for its Aliquippa Works, twenty miles downriver on the Ohio; that would end up matching the output of the Pittsburgh plant. Henry Hughart Laughlin, who had taken an engineering degree at Princeton, supervised the electrification. On the death of his father, in 1922, Henry Laughlin inherited four million dollars. Two weeks later, he packed up his office and never went back.

"I hated the whole business," Laughlin said one afternoon in Norfolk as, dressed in bathing suits, we drove up a leafy road to Toby Pond, about a mile through the woods from Meadow House. Laughlin was at the wheel of

Victoria Roberts

"Just wondering—after you steal my thunder, what do you do with it?"

• •

his blue Dodge station wagon—the only size car, he swears, that is big enough for him to get his legs under the dashboard. "The mill was so noisy and frightening. It was so hot. We went every Thanksgiving. We would look around. I was terrified. The noise was unbelievable." He edged the station wagon over a large hump in the dirt road, and then added, "But I'm lucky. I didn't have to sit at a desk all day and figure out how many ore pipes to order, like my brother did. I refused to go into the business—it scared me to death. I *never* thought of New Directions as a business. I thought of it as something to do. I had an identification with Fitzgerald—I was an escapee from America. There was an overworking of the Puritan in me. There was no one to talk to in Pittsburgh. Romney, Lawrence, the English portraitists—that was everyone's idea of art. At boarding school, at Le Rosey, in Switzerland, where I went when I was thirteen, there was a M. Jacquet. He was a cultivated and inspired man. He would read aloud, '*Des yeux sans nombre ont vu l'aurore maintenant ils dorment au fond du tombeau.*' That kind of poetry means a lot to a kid. He moved me, and I believed him."

By the time Laughlin, at fourteen, was sent to the Eaglebrook School, in Massachusetts, his parenting had almost entirely been taken over by his Aunt Leila, his father's sister. Leila and her husband, G. Lister Carlisle, had no children, and James became to all intents and purposes their son. "Which was lucky for me," he says. "She was really old-line. There was a right way and a wrong way to polish brass doorknobs; she told everyone what they should do, and I was the only one who listened. She was very fond of her father, and I was named for him, and she battened on to me. Whenever my father was having one of his manic phases, she would bring him up to Norfolk and lecture him and try to keep him from going too far, but it never worked. Aunt Leila was very strong for children, but I sensed a reluctance in her to have them—she was afraid they would be like her brothers. She had the ear of an angel, with whom she communicated by automatic writing. She was on the telephone to Mrs. Sage, the medium over in Pleasantville, New York, every day. Curiously, the angel's name was not Lister but Lester. I was often the subject of those letters. She would write: 'Dear Lester, I'm worried about James: he keeps making girls fall in love with him.' I still have those letters around somewhere. My Uncle Lister was very fond of the safari he took to Africa. Before he went, he said, 'We're going to find a superb lion for the African Hall.' And there it is now, the Carlisle Expedition Lion."

"Where?" I asked.

"Why, in the Natural History Museum on Seventy-ninth Street," he said, taking a deck chair out of the boathouse.

After Eaglebrook, Laughlin went to Choate, and then, in 1932, he entered Harvard, but it bored him. He says now, "I had no trouble believing my teacher Dudley Fitts when he told me I would learn more from Ezra Pound in Europe than I would in college, so I took the summer and the year after my freshman year off. Fitts was in the English Department at Choate, and he tutored us in Dante and Aeschylus—heady stuff for high school—and he knew *writers.* I met Gertrude Stein and spent six weeks with her, writing press releases for her upcoming tour to America. After that, autumn in Paris was cold and gray, and I wired Ezra Pound in Rapallo, asking if I might come and see him. He wired back, 'VISIBILITY HIGH.' He was living with his wife, Dorothy, who was a very nice lady from Kensington, at the Albergo Rapallo. He converted me to the theory of Social Credit, which had been proposed by C. H. Douglas, an English engineer out in India, who believed in a national dividend, universally applied. It was really a better version of what the welfare system is now. Then, after I'd been in Rapallo for a while, he said, 'Go back and finish Hahvuhd, and your family will be pleased with you and start giving you money.' Also, he read some of my poems, and told me to leave off writing poetry. He told me that if I wasn't going to fulfill my obligation to society by assassinating Henry Seidel Canby, the editor of the *Saturday Review*, I should start a publishing company. He promised me that he would have writers he knew send me manuscripts. The second year I was at school, my father came up to Cambridge and said, 'Now you have to learn about taking care of money.' We went over to the Kidder, Peabody offices across the street, and we bought one hundred thousand dollars of blue-chip stock. That yielded about six thousand dollars a year, and my expenses were about two thousand."

By 1935, in addition to working on the Harvard *Advocate*, where he met James Agee and Robert Lowell and the translator Robert Fitzgerald (another protégé of Dudley Fitts', who became a lifelong friend), Laughlin had taken over as literary editor for a year-old journal called *New Democ-*

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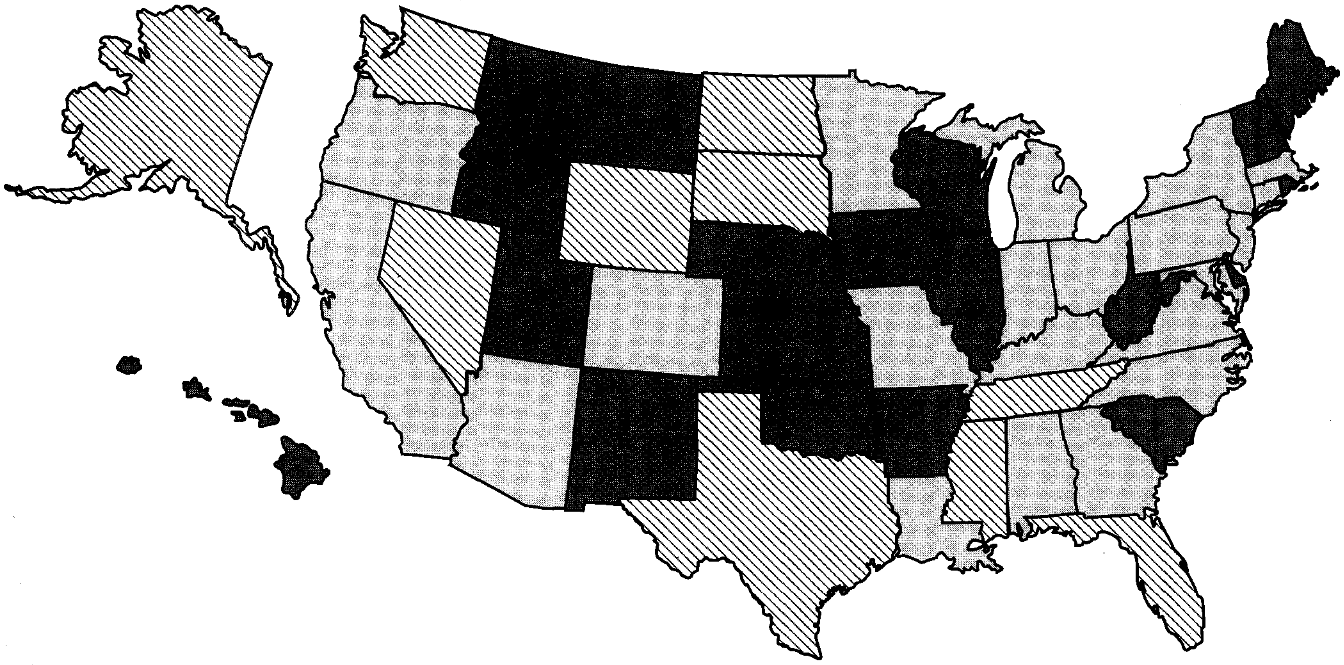

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racy. It was based in New York, and edited by the critic Gorham Munson; Laughlin's section, which printed poetry and reviews, was called New Directions in Literature. Continuing a correspondence with T. S. Eliot that he had started from Rapallo, at Pound's urging, Laughlin wrote in 1935 to ask if he could reprint a poem of Eliot's. Eliot agreed, adding that he hoped Laughlin *liked* the poem and wasn't printing it only because he was "Mr. Eliot of Russell Square." In February of 1936, Laughlin wrote to Eliot that, in part because of Eliot's appearance in New Directions, he was now being sent the best work of the younger poets; by then, he had decided to follow Pound's injunction and start a publishing company with the money left over from his dividends. Its first project, after printing a story of Montagu O'Reilly's as a pamphlet, would be to publish a yearly anthology of contemporary writing. The pilot issue was put together in the course of a year, and it appeared in the fall of 1936. The authors were a Pound-sponsored group, including Pound himself, Elizabeth Bishop, E. E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, John Wheelwright, William Carlos Williams, Henry Miller, Kay Boyle, and Jean Cocteau. The anthology was called *New Directions in Prose & Poetry*, and it was dedicated

TO
THE EDITORS
THE CONTRIBUTORS
& THE READERS
of
transition
who have begun successfully
THE REVOLUTION OF
THE WORD.

(Another literary magazine, *transition* was published in Paris.) Much of the material was reprinted from Laughlin's New Directions section, and the first pages carried a preface by its very young publisher and editor, who signed himself J.L. IV. It read, in part:

> When, in October, 1935, I chose for the title of that section the name "New Directions" . . . I proposed that the department would attempt to collect in its pages all the most technically-advanced prose and poetry of American writers, all the work which exhibited a desire on the part of its author to set out in a new philological direction . . . and the fact that it existed at all, reflected the change in the state of the world mind whose spearhead was the New Economics of Major Douglas.
>
> The emphasis of leadership was then upon the economist rather than the poet.
>
> But since that time, nearly a year of hard experience in the propagation of Social Credit has led me to feel that the emphasis should be reversed: it is the poet—the word-worker—who must lead.

"What was *that* all about?" I asked Laughlin one morning at Meadow House, handing him the copy of the first Annual, as he calls it, which he had given me to read.

Laughlin shook his head with an expression of mock horror and said, "I had joined the Boston Social Credit Party, and I had given out leaflets in the subway: 'Who Has Your Money, Who Makes Use Of Your Money, Read Below.' They took me off the train, said I was littering."

"How did your family feel about Social Credit?" I asked.

"They were so ingrained in their concept of real Pittsburgh money that they just thought it was more of Ezra's craziness. My father was always harping on the responsibility of wealth: doing things with your wealth was an obligation." Laughlin paused and then said, "At Harvard, I was part of a group called the Wingless Angels. That was because David Rockefeller was so pious. He went to chapel *every* Sunday. He had a poor boy who came in and helped him once a week with his beetle collection. Even then he had one of the finest collections in the world. The boy came along every Thursday; he was paid handsomely by David's mother to keep David democratic."

Laughlin filled his pipe and took an experimental drag. "You know," he said after a moment, "I literally believed everything Ezra told me, except the anti-Semitism and the Fascism. Sometimes I dream about him at night. It would have been normal for me to be anti-Semitic. Everyone in Pittsburgh was anti-Semitic. One Jewish family moved in and the families lived in terror that another Jew would buy a house on Woodland Road."

"Why not you?" I asked.

Laughlin gave me a steady look. "I always have had a modicum of personal decency. The way it hit me was the first year I was at Rapallo with Ezra. It was the Ethiopian war, and Ezra had been sent *fascista* propaganda, horrible pictures of the Italians emasculated by the native Abyssinians. He took great pleasure in showing these pictures around, and I began to wonder whether he was really mad. He was paranoid, because he thought he should have won the Nobel Prize around 1930. He said it was the fault of the dumb Swedes. It just took him over."

WHEN Laughlin smokes, as he does almost constantly—either a pipe, a cheroot, or, after dinner, a 230 Montecruz cigar from the Dominican Republic, sent to him from Dunhill—he stubs out the embers carefully. Five years ago, the main part of Meadow House burned down. The fire was started by a wooden match that missed an ashtray. The blaze took with it a portion of Laughlin's huge library, including a shelf of books by and about Sextus Propertius. The French books that fill the shelves on an upstairs landing still show signs of smoke damage. Today, there are fire extinguishers in the reconstructed rooms of the house.

Meadow House conforms with a Laughlin penchant for the long interior views afforded by Palladian architecture: it measures a hundred and eighty feet from one end to the other. One old friend calls it a horizontal metaphor for its vertical owner. It looks out on an eight-acre meadow, which Laughlin cleared by hand and which is inhabited by descendants of Highland sheep that Aunt Leila imported to keep down the grass. A three-hundred-and-fifty-acre wood surrounds the house and the meadow. Laughlin tends to stay either in his study, off the kitchen, or in a two-room office at the other end of the house, which holds his New Directions correspondence.

We were sitting in the study. All the books on the shelves were helter-skelter, and he looked around at them for a moment and said, "The early years at New Directions were utter chaos. I didn't know how to do anything and I was a know-it-all. I thought Ezra had taught me all I needed to know. It was total confusion. We were tiny and disorganized. I didn't think New Directions was going to last. I didn't think I was going to be able to keep its nose above water. There was an impermanency to the venture. Now, Alfred Knopf, I admired him—the way he kept doing wonderful stuff. He had everything so beautifully organized. And he was a feisty character. He wore purple shirts and yellow ties. He was banned from the Century Club because he had so many enemies. He did good books—he didn't do any trash. He was a pro. We would get out one catalogue and hope for the best. I borrowed money from Aunt Leila, or Mother or Father. Usually they read a little bit, and then stopped, because they thought the books were so horrible! My mother wasn't a reader. Her hero was Lloyd C. Douglas. My father was sort of literary—he liked Dickens. The only one in the house who read the books was a parlormaid. She took a long time dusting them."

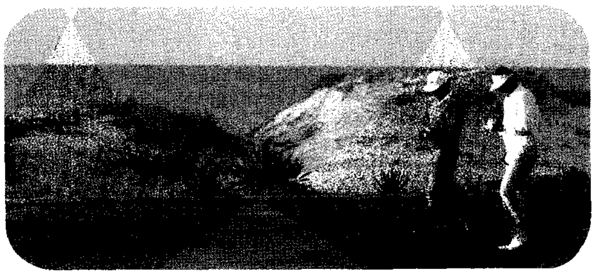
He stopped, and thumbed through his personal telephone book, as if through a stack of dollar bills. "In those days," he went on, "we kept what we called the Theodora Sedgwick Memorial Notebook, named for the beautiful daughter of Ellery Sedgwick, the editor of the *Atlantic*. It was a strange mix of notes to myself, skiing records, girls' addresses, and lists of how much each book cost. It was all in hand, including how much I had cadged from Aunt Leila, carefully written down. 'What have you done with the last money I gave you?' she would ask."

When friends cast their minds back to Laughlin's relations with his Aunt Leila, "devotion" and "terror" are words that keep coming up.

"What did Aunt Leila look like?" I asked.

"She wasn't beautiful—she was determined-looking. She had will power sprouting from her eyes. For breakfast, she ate one raw egg. Afterward, I would go and sit with her and she would criticize me. She read religious tracts. My other cousins wouldn't put up with her."

In New Directions' first few years as a full-scale publishing house, the catalogues listed, among other titles, "The Complete Collected Poems, 1906-1938," by William Carlos Williams; "We'll to the Woods No More," by Édouard Dujardin; "A Glad Day," poems by Kay Boyle; "Maule's Curse," by Yvor Winters; Pound's "Guide to Kulchur" and his translation of Confucius' "Ta Hio"; "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," by Delmore Schwartz; "Twelve Poets of the Pacific," edited by Yvor Winters; "The Garden of Disorder," poems by Charles Henri Ford; "One Hundred Poems from the Palatine Anthology," translated by Dudley Fitts; and an anthology of essays about James Joyce. In the summers and during the Harvard reading periods, before exams, Laughlin had piled the books into the back of his old Buick and taken off across the country, where he tried to sell books to the booksellers in the little bookshops in small towns, in much the same way that he was trying to sell the idea of the press itself to his Aunt Leila. The Annual for 1939 showed his continued success at spotting new talent: it contained work by, among others, John Berryman, Elizabeth Bishop, Richard Eberhart, Lawrence Durrell, and Robert Fitzgerald, as well as long sections from Henry Miller's "Tropic of Capricorn." Laughlin hired an assistant to work with him in Cambridge, and the poet Kenneth Patchen and his wife took over the chores at Norfolk—keeping track of stock and



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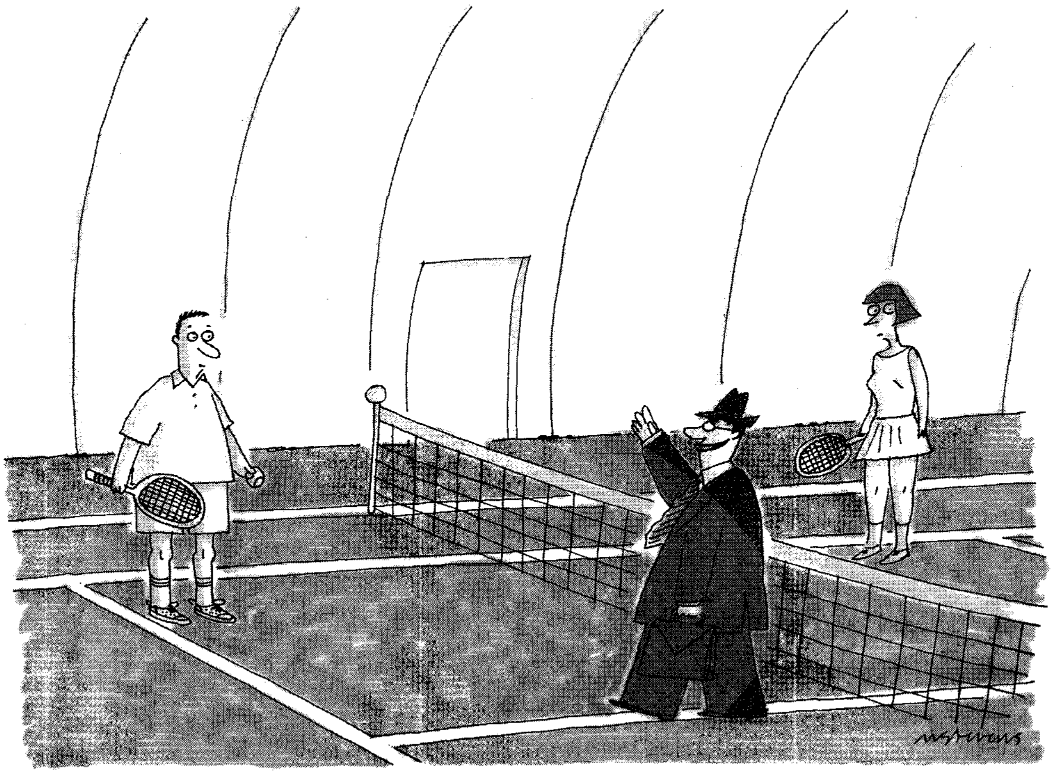

"Insurance, anyone?"

• •

packing books—in exchange for a place to live. It was all right as long as it lasted, Laughlin says, but after six months the Norfolk operation was moved into a Cambridge apartment leased by Delmore Schwartz and his wife, Gertrude Buckman, at 41 Bowdoin Street, for which Laughlin paid the rent.

The Theodora Sedgwick notebook is lost, but a folder dated 1938 gives a hint of what might have been in it: Laughlin's parents' address, with a standing order for a copy of every New Directions book to be sent there; a note that reads "Who is E. E. Cummings? We have an order for his Poems"; a Western Union telegram, postmarked Monterey, California, and addressed to New Directions ("PLEASE CONTACT LAUGHLIN IMMEDIATELY AND ASK IF HE WILL WIRE ME A SMALL SUM MUST LEAVE FOR NEW YORK MOTHER DYING—HENRY MILLER"); and a thirty-five-cent chit from the Alta Club Barber Shop, in Salt Lake City, for a shave, signed "J. Laughlin."

AT the same time that Laughlin was starting up New Directions, a venture out West had begun to consume an equal amount of his time and energy. It took Laughlin seven years to graduate from Harvard, because, besides going on bookselling forays, he kept taking terms off to go skiing—in Austria, where he studied at Hannes Schneider's Arlberg ski school; in France; and on the Tasman Glacier, in New Zealand, where he made up an American ski team with some Dartmouth students. Although Laughlin had done some skiing as a child on Woodland Road, his first real experience of downhill skiing was at Le Rosey. In the winter, the whole school moved up into the Alps from Lake Geneva. There were no lifts then—the students spent most of each day hiking up the mountains, and this experience left Laughlin ever afterward with the feeling that that was the way skiing should be.

In 1939, Dick Durrance, one of the Dartmouth students on the ski team in New Zealand, called up Laughlin in Norfolk to tell him that he should come out to Alta, Utah, where the second ski lift in the country had been running since the beginning of the year. "Dick was *fantastic*," Laughlin said to me one morning in Norfolk. "A little bowlegged man with a big smile. He loved Alta because it was really alpine. I went out there, and I could see the place was an absolute natural."

The town of Alta, which now has a year-round population of seventy-five people and its own post office, is situated in Little Cottonwood Canyon, about twenty-five miles southeast of Salt Lake City. The canyon is one of the crevices that run west to east in the Wasatch Mountains. The mountains rise straight up from the Great Basin, and Alta rests in the fold of two slopes whose peaks exceed eleven thousand feet. It is generally believed that Utah has some of the best snow in the world for skiing (the motto on Utah license plates is "The Greatest Snow on Earth"), and there are people who think that Alta, by virtue of its unique position and meteorological circumstances, is the best place for snow in Utah.

Alta is reached by a hairpin road that climbs steadily upward—a ride of thirty minutes or so, depending on road and weather conditions—through some of the most formidable mountain scenery in the country. The favorable conditions for skiing come about when heavy winter storms, which get their start in the Aleutian Islands, move southeast across the desert and then hit the high peaks of the Wasatch; they are unable to rise over them, because of their load, and dump masses of powder snow on the Alta slopes before continuing east. Alta gets an average of five hundred and fifty inches of snow per year. In a good year, like 1983, it can get as much as eight hundred inches. (Killington, in Vermont, gets about two hundred inches of natural snow a year.) In a bad year, like this one, the base at Alta is still about a foot deeper than that of any of the other ski areas in the region.

Alta was originally a silver-mining town, but at the turn of the century much of the settlement was destroyed by fire; a few years later, what remained of the town was almost completely erased by avalanches. The miners had taken so many trees off the slopes to build their houses that there was nothing to hold the snow back. By

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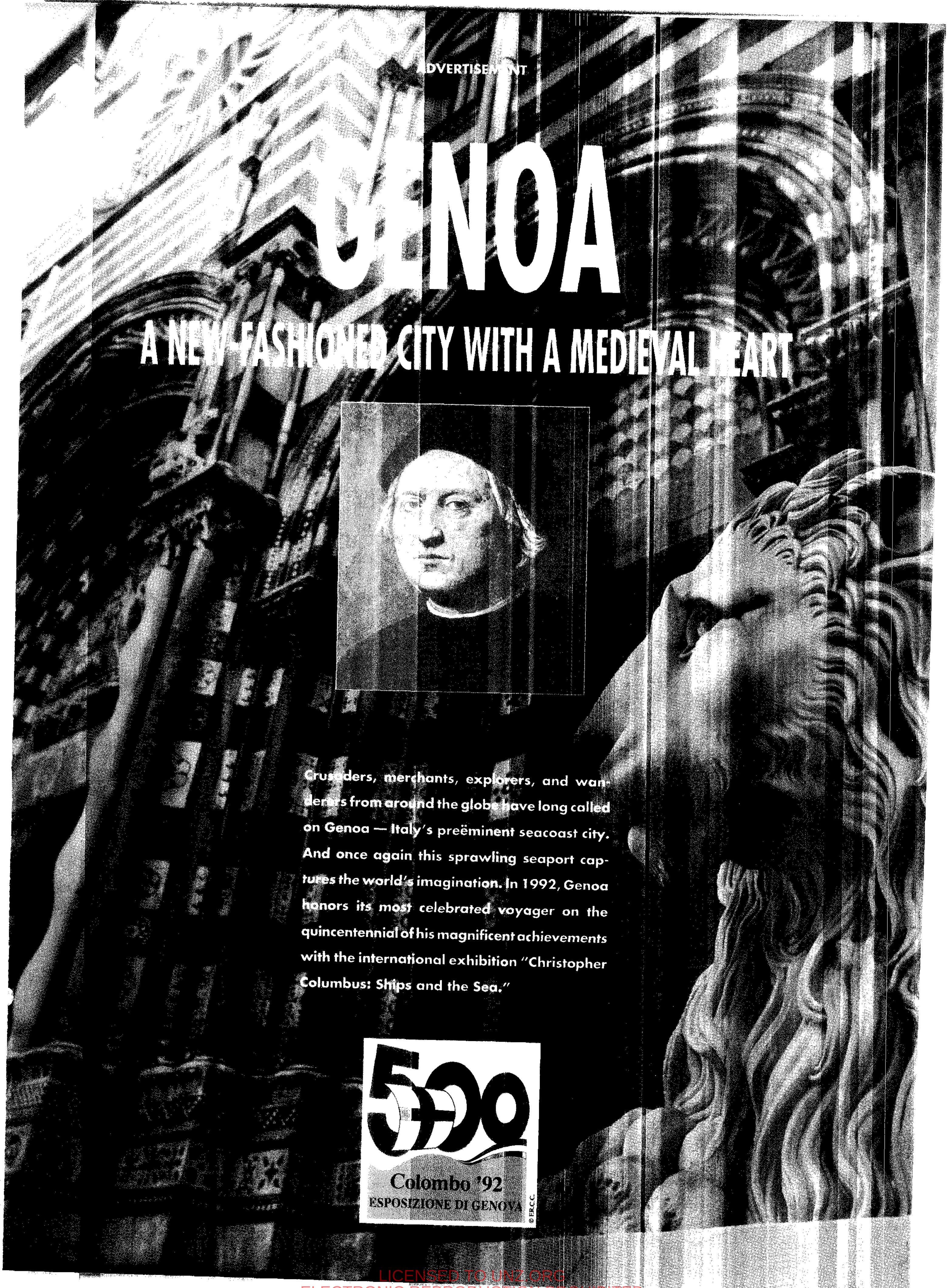

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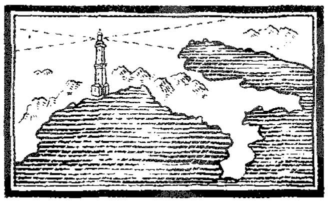

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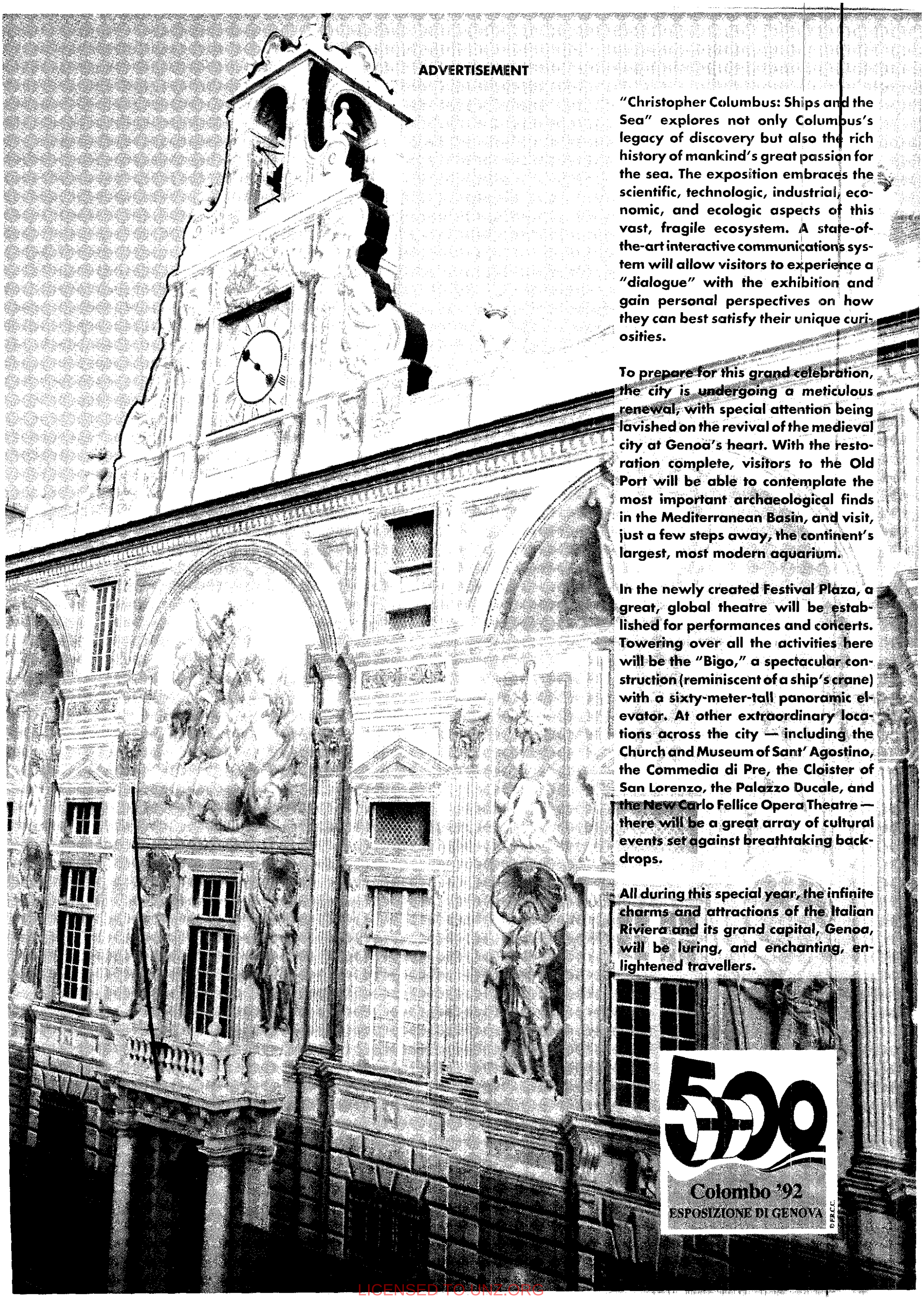

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To prepare for this grand celebration, the city is undergoing a meticulous renewal, with special attention being lavished on the revival of the medieval city at Genoa's heart. With the restoration complete, visitors to the Old Port will be able to contemplate the most important archaeological finds in the Mediterranean Basin, and visit, just a few steps away, the continent's largest, most modern aquarium.

In the newly created Festival Plaza, a great, global theatre will be established for performances and concerts. Towering over all the activities here will be the "Bigo," a spectacular construction (reminiscent of a ship's crane) with a sixty-meter-tall panoramic elevator. At other extraordinary locations across the city — including the Church and Museum of Sant' Agostino, the Commedia di Pre, the Cloister of San Lorenzo, the Palazzo Ducale, and the New Carlo Fellice Opera Theatre — there will be a great array of cultural events set against breathtaking backdrops.

All during this special year, the infinite charms and attractions of the Italian Riviera and its grand capital, Genoa, will be luring, and enchanting, enlightened travellers.

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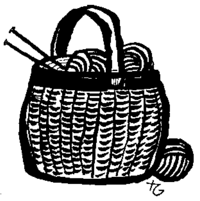

then, the price of silver ore had dropped, and there was no incentive to rebuild. Alta turned into a wrecked village stranded above Salt Lake. In the early twenties, Alta's only resident, George Watson, who had voted himself mayor, bought up a number of the old mining claims and tried to see if he could get them running again. His efforts failed, and in 1938 Watson deeded the land—almost two thousand acres—to the United States Forest Service in exchange for being excused from back taxes. Two years later, the Salt Lake City Winter Sports Association, which was made up of a group of outdoors-minded residents, obtained a lease on the land from the Forest Service and persuaded the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Company to invest twenty-five thousand dollars in building a lodge at Alta. But by the time Laughlin, following Dick Durrance's advice, came out to Alta, the lodge had only six rooms. The Association had run out of money, and the building hung out in space, over a cliff. Laughlin signed a contract with the Association stipulating that he would put another twenty-five thousand dollars down and finish the Alta Lodge if they would let him have the lease for free.

There are eight chair lifts at Alta now. Laughlin and a partner built them one by one over the years. He recruited Sverre and Alf Engen, two brothers from Norway, to run the ski school, which they built up into a teaching-and-training program that includes eighty instructors, who are often recruited to head the ski schools and ski patrols at other resorts. Alf Engen, who is eighty-three now, and still skiing (he was the first person to ski jump the length of a football field, and he doubled for Errol Flynn and Montgomery Clift in ski movies), says, "J was so radiant all the time—he never acted as if he was more important than anyone else. He wore an old raccoon coat and a cowboy hat. Just by looking at him you could see he wasn't here to take anyone."

The land at Alta still belongs to the Forest Service; the Alta Ski Lifts Company, in which Laughlin has a controlling interest, runs the lifts and the ski school. When the Forest Service acquired the land, it had the Civilian Conservation Corps plant native grasses and thousands of evergreens to keep the snow back. Hardly any of those trees have been taken out since. All the runs at Alta, with the exception of a few lift tracks and the last part of a beginner's run, are natural or have been cut in through the trees to look as if they had occurred naturally. There are virtually no straight cuts. Large areas of the slopes are kept ungroomed altogether, for the powder skiers. The lifts are double chairs, without bars across them, rather than the quads that have become popular at other ski areas. The ride up to Sugarloaf, which at 11,051 feet is just a few yards shy of Mt. Baldy, Alta's highest slope, is over a mile and a half long. The run down to the basin is three miles, and the drop is about two thousand feet. Until last year, the Lifts Company didn't take credit cards, and the only discounts offered are to skiers over eighty, who ski free. The manager of the Lifts Company is Onno Wieringa, an unfazable man, who looks as if he had been carved quickly out of a pine tree trunk, and who has been at Alta for almost his whole working life. He likes to say, "We're called, first off, the skier's mountain. For people who say 'I'd like to have someone take the skis off my car,' we're not the place."

Wieringa took over the management of the Lifts Company from Chic Morton, who held the job for thirty years. During Morton's tenure, Laughlin would ask him every summer what they would have to charge the following year, assuming a good year, to make a "reasonable" profit. (Even now, the prices at Alta remain low: an all-day lift ticket is $21.) Bill Levitt, now the owner of the Alta Lodge, which Laughlin sold to him in 1958, and for twenty-two years Alta's mayor, says, "It's something old money can afford to do. Everyone said, 'J, Snowbird's going up, Park City's going up,' and he just said, 'I'm not interested in those people.' "

Laughlin is in the living room, in Norfolk, drinking his one Scotch of the day, before dinner. He shakes his head, and says, "You've got to keep some places like God made them. If you overdo it, you'll destroy Alta. We've never done anything with the south slope, because I feel the sun comes around and spoils the snow. I take great pride in Alta, because it's the one

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place that's left that's a little like the old skiing. We used to have a guy with a helicopter who picked you up and dropped you wherever you were going and you skied back to Alta. That's the attraction, skiing through clouds. You get the feeling when you're going down the slope that you're flying. It's a lovely experience. A sexy experience. Some things come back—now they're coming down the mountain on touring skis. My son Henry's very good at that, using those old Telemark skis. It's very sexy, I can tell you. Feet apart and you're ready to go into a stem if you run into any trouble. We had one Sunday that scared the wits out of the staff: eight thousand people. We cannot accommodate more than four thousand, and we're finally getting the Forest Service to agree with us about stopping cars coming up the road. Aspen's got thirty lifts! It's overdeveloped. You lose the contact with raw nature."

FOR years, Laughlin took his typewriter out to Alta, and his New Directions mail came after him. "J was always a mystery," says Drue Heinz, the widow of Jack Heinz, the ketchup magnate, with whom Laughlin shared his boyhood in Pittsburgh. "He would go skiing, and afterward he would go straight back to his room and talk into this mysterious tape recorder and then send these mumblings off to his secretary. For such a gentleman of the old school, he was really terribly modern. He always worked. He was a great lesson in how to enjoy yourself without that pressurized look everyone has these days."

Running New Directions through the mails worked most of the time, though there were glitches. Delmore Schwartz's book-length poem "Genesis" disappeared for six months, and turned up under the floorboards of the Alta mail truck. "It was a noble concept," Laughlin says now about the poem. "Freud and Marx talking to this boy from Brooklyn, but it was boring. It drove me crazy, looking for that manuscript that was going to be the greatest thing since Dante."

One morning, Laughlin said to me, "Why do I like the mail? It's a habit and a pleasure. And these days my social life consists of the P.O., the newsstand, and the bank." Laughlin dislikes the telephone; his daughter, Leila, says that if you call him up he'll say it's nice to hear your voice but a postcard would have done. Laughlin's New Directions correspondence is kept in the two large, vaulted and beamed rooms at the south end of Meadow House. Together, they look more like rooms in an elegant ski lodge than an office. A long and wide cherry table takes up the center of the second room, and it is big enough to hold a trail of letters that, fitted together, could be the spine of a huge animal.

Bective Poplars
Cherry Grove
24/7/47

Dear Laughlin,

Glad you like Firbank. I feel strongly that you should do an Omnibus. . . .

Copyrights should be cheap, I think.

Yours ever,
Wystan Auden

Murray Hill Hotel
March 11, 1937

Dear Mr. Laughlin:

I have not answered your letter sooner because I have been thinking about it: I appreciate your offering to make a book for me very much but I am afraid that at present I just haven't enough material from which to make one. . . .

Very sincerely,
Elizabeth Bishop

1418½ Clouser St.
Orlando, Fla.

Dear Mr. Laughlin

It came as great news to me that you were interested in VISIONS OF NEAL. I have the feeling that some day this book will be clutched underarm by young American writers like some kind of bible. . . .

Yours,
Jack Kerouac

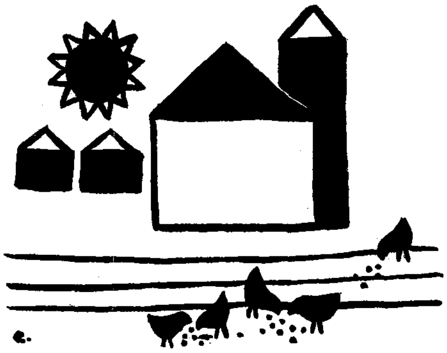
p.s. . . . I'm very serious about this and am still smart enough as a hobo-wanderer and general Dharma-bum to ward off money-temptations & keep my literature clean. . . .

260 Cumberland Street
Brooklyn, New York
September 30, 1937

Dear Mr. Laughlin:

Although it is rather uncharacteristic of me to ask to be given what I ought to buy, I see that you are sincere in offering me the Williams book and am going to allow you to give it to me, for I *should* like to have it, and see the impression it makes collectively. (Dr. Williams on second thought perhaps felt that since he had given me separate chapters as they appeared, it might seem a little insistent to be sending the book also.) . . .

Sincerely yours,
Marianne Moore



Norfolk, Conn.
July 12th

Dear Merton—

. . . I would be most grateful if you would suggest to me some books which might put me in the way of furthering my desire to increase the spiritual component in my life. I have a weakness for "color" and there is a danger of my approach being sentimental . . . but I think I am an essentially religious person. I do feel most constantly a wish to lead a less material and frivolous life. I am not good with people—I mean them well, but the ready and empty word does not come easily to me—so that I think my bent is probably more toward meditation than social work. . . .

All best,
J. Laughlin

c/o Ezra Pound
Via Marsale 12 v
Rapallo, Italy
April 30, 1938

Dear [Dylan] Thomas:

. . . I'm so glad to have your letters and know that the twenty dollars was of some use to you. . . . I want to say again how distressed I am not to be more liberal, but I am sure you will understand that the resources of New Directions must be used principally for production expenses. . . . I hope you will take it upon yourself to educate me about the things that I publish. If you think a lot of the things in NEW DIRECTIONS are awful please tell me so, and why. I want to be helped. I am not proud about this, or very sensitive. What I have is good intentions. And I need help from the gifted to see that I don't waste my good intentions on bad writing. . . .

I worry about you. . . . I wish I could get some sort of part work that would give you something to go on. I don't mean that I don't realize that writing good poetry takes all a man's time. But you do have to eat. . . .

Laughlin

Not all Laughlin's relationships with writers were smooth. His time as Delmore Schwartz's publisher, which lasted until the poet's death, in 1966, was particularly volatile. In Cambridge in the forties, Schwartz resisted when Laughlin asked that he introduce a woman whom Laughlin was keeping in the New Directions apartment, where Schwartz was living with his wife, as Schwartz's sister. In a letter headed "Pigsburgh" and addressed to "SATANIC THRONE" Laughlin wrote to Schwartz, "All right, she's your little old Irish grandmother. I don't care what she is, but she's got to be something."

Schwartz constantly fell out with Laughlin about money, and in the fifties there were bouts every two years or so during which Laughlin, who had by now relocated the business to New York, refused to see him. He said recently, "It was because whenever I saw Delmore, he would scream at me. You could hear him across Sixth Avenue. Then one day he came into the office with a sick old alley cat and tied its leg to my typewriter with a piece of string. He was going on about how Nelson Rockefeller and I had seduced his second wife, Elizabeth. That's how crazy he was."

"Didn't it bother you?"

"I got used to it. I *am* used to it. All of them do it. But if an author was terribly difficult I just dropped him. I tended to want people to do just what I wanted and how I wanted to do things. Berryman had a terrible line about me—I was messy, but I wasn't 'horrible.' I just couldn't stand Berryman. He was so preposterous and sly and arrogant."

"But wasn't Schwartz difficult?" I asked.

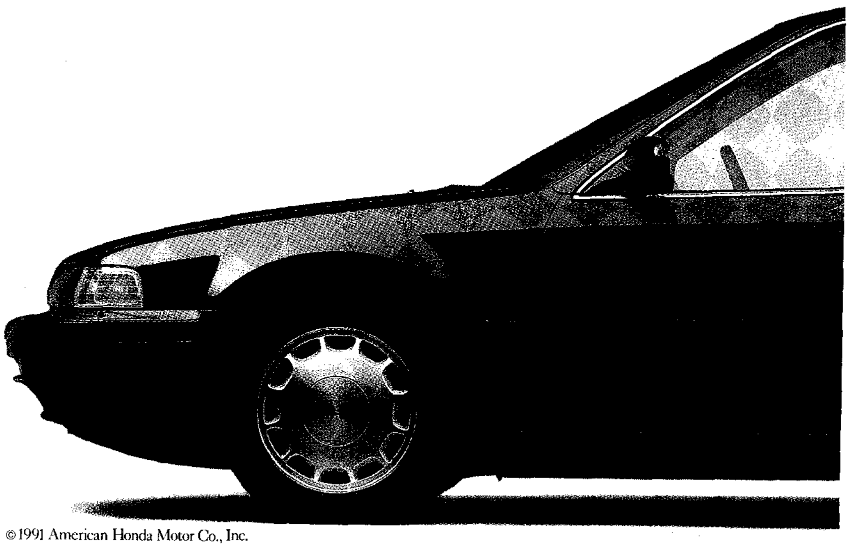
"Yes, but I *loved* Delmore. And even from Delmore's letters it's clear he wasn't going to another publisher. The critics were saying about New Directions, 'This is literature, this is real,' and the writers wanted to be in on that." Laughlin smiled. "I've always gotten good advice. Delmore charged a dollar a year for his. It was Ezra who put me on to Marianne Moore. Ezra loved her and admired her, and I don't think he ever stifled her. She was all tied up, so we didn't publish her, but I admired her wonderful choice of décor—animal, vegetable, and mineral. I'm sure she mentioned Elizabeth Bishop, which is how we got her in the Annual, but Bishop didn't want to be in one of our five-poet anthologies—something I suggested when she said she didn't have enough work. Quite rightly, she wanted to stand on her own. She and Beckett are the two I'm sorry about. Grove published him. It kept them going for years. *Imagine* all the people who have to read 'Godot.' I wish I'd got Seamus Heaney, too. I think he's marvellous. Bill Williams encouraged the Beats, but he encouraged everybody. I didn't have a crystal ball. It was Mark Van Doren who passed Merton along to us. Giroux published most of his work, but we published all his poetry, even though I thought it was a little schmalzy-Catholic."

Laughlin often went down to the Abbey of Gethsemani, in Kentucky, to visit Merton. (The visits were allowed because the books brought money into the monastery coffers.) "I've always thought, If you can't be a writer, at least you can be around writers. The abbot let me hire a car and drive Merton around," Laughlin said, with the relish he usually reserves for ski stories. "We'd get started off, and Merton would have been up since God knows when. He never tried to convert me. He'd say, 'Don't pay any attention to those guys and their singing.' Once we got a mile or so down the road, he'd bolt into the woods and change into his overalls. We'd stop at four or five bars in an afternoon. There was a movement at the monastery to make him an abbot, but Tom didn't *want* to be an abbot. He got a poster up: 'TV in every room! Baseball every afternoon!' I've got it here somewhere."

Laughlin peered with mild curiosity at a spot on the ceiling, and then said, "He always wanted to be ecumenical. Some of his friends got up a little fund so he could go to Asia. All his life, he was trying to have a mystical experience—he was trying for it at the monastery—and he finally had it in Ceylon, with the huge sleeping Buddhas at Polonnaruwa."

Merton died in Asia. A small suitcase came back on the plane with his body. It was marked 'For James Laughlin,' and inside were Merton's diaries, which Laughlin helped edit for publication. The work took him two years, mainly because all the theological references had to be checked. "It sold all right," he says. "Two or three thousand copies."

Laughlin's expectations of the book-buying public were never high; when a book did do well, he was often astonished. In a letter to Delmore Schwartz, he explained that as soon as he started to count on making money from New Directions books, he would "drift into printing crap." In another letter, sent in 1938 to Dylan Thomas, two years before New Directions published "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog," he wrote, "Ordinarily a good book of stories by a newcomer would do between three and five hundred in America. But, if as I imagine is the



From beginning

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case, your prose work is like your verse, that is, brilliant but esoteric, it is likely that it would not do so well." He added that the intellectual set who had taken up Joyce a decade earlier were now too involved in the Spanish Civil War to have time for pure literature.

By the mid-forties, Laughlin had published two of Joyce's books, "Exiles" (the play had first been published by Viking, and New Directions reprinted it) and "Stephen Hero." "Theodore Spencer, at Harvard, had heard that the manuscript of 'Stephen Hero' was for sale, and he decided that the Harvard Library should buy it and that New Directions should print it," he said recently. "I met Joyce in 1955. When he opened the door to me in Paris, he told me that he thought we had last met at the battle of Clontarf. I was baffled, but then he said that Clontarf was where the Irish had routed the Danish pirates, and that Laughlin meant 'pirate' in Danish. I asked him if he had been influenced by a book we'd published called 'We'll to the Woods No More,' by Édouard Dujardin, who used the stream-of-consciousness technique. And then he went into what I think was a leg-pull. He said, 'I was going down to Tours to hear a tenor, and I went in the company of a Siamese prince who had taken the name of Ulysée in my honor. We had to change trains. In the bookseller booth on the quay, I picked up this little book and I read it with *considerable* interest.' " Laughlin paused. "But Joyce may very well have thought of *monologue intérieur* by himself. He asked me where I was from, and when I told him he said, 'Ah, Pennsylvania. Can you by any chance remember the streams and rivers near your paternal farm?' Here was a man who was simply passionate for the sounds of words. There he was, in that ghastly parlor with its antimacassars, and he wanted to know the names of the towns, and if I remembered the names of any of the local stock. Fortunately, I recalled our caretaker's name: Lloyd Hostetler. As soon as I told him the names of people, that was it."

THE one writer Laughlin was never done with was Pound. In the first decades of New Directions, he found himself increasingly concerned not only with Pound's work but with his problems. After an absence of almost twenty years, Pound returned to the United States in 1939 in order to talk to President Roosevelt about the inadvisability, as Pound saw it, of America's entering the war. (Laughlin himself didn't serve in the war. He received a 4-F classification, on psychiatric grounds, from a doctor who had treated his father and grandfather, and he spent most of the war years running things at Alta, where the Army was training paratroopers to ski.) Pound couldn't get an appointment at the White House, and in 1941 he began his weekly radio broadcasts from Rapallo. In 1943, the United States government indicted him for treason on account of the broadcasts—which had become vituperative and openly supported Mussolini—and two years later he was jailed in a metal cage in Pisa. In November, 1945, when Pound was brought to Washington for trial, Laughlin felt strongly that a judgment of insanity would be in his best interest, and he hired a doctor to speak in Pound's defense. Pound was

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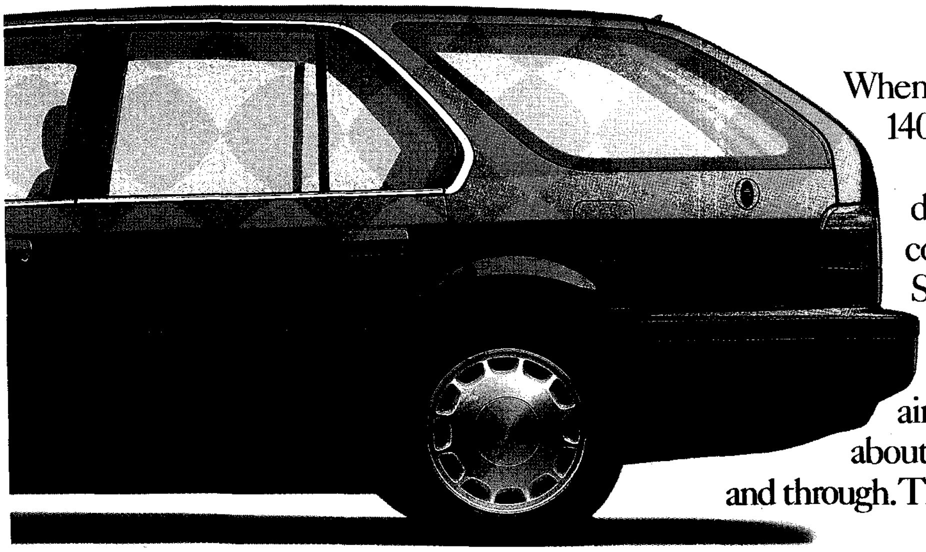

deemed incompetent to stand trial by reason of insanity in February, 1946, and was committed to St. Elizabeths mental hospital, in Washington; his stay there lasted until 1958. During this time, New Directions published five books that Pound had written or revised at St. Elizabeths.

In 1967, nine years after Pound's release—a release accomplished in part on the strength of his artistic reputation as sustained by New Directions, and in part by pressure, marshalled by Laughlin, from literary figures such as Archibald MacLeish and Robert Frost—Pound and his companion, Olga Rudge, who had come from Venice, spent a weekend at Meadow House. On the following Monday, Laughlin was to receive an honorary degree from Hamilton College, which Pound had attended—an honor that Laughlin says, with what one friend calls his "customary self-deprecation-but-not-quite," was given to him on account of his being Pound's publisher. Pound, who was then in a nonspeaking phase, sat on the couch in the living room all day Sunday, looking out at the view. Late in the day, using the Italian word for "grandfather," Laughlin said to his son Henry, "Go up and ask him if you can call him Nonno."

Henry Laughlin, then seven years old, did as he was told. Pound turned from the window and said, "Greatly honored."

Speaking of Laughlin not long ago, Mary de Rachewiltz, Pound's daughter, said, "He was the ideal member of the family." Pound, for his part, easily became a member of Laughlin's family, if only because he acted like one. Not only was he in his own way as autocratic and as intolerant as Aunt Leila but later the very nature of Pound's calamities was such that in addressing them Laughlin was on familiar territory. Pound's broadcasts coincided with the onset of Laughlin's father's bouts of manic depression, and Pound's trip to the White House came just after two trying visits to Washington by Laughlin's cousin George, who had twice attempted to tell Roosevelt he was ruining the country's economy. (The second time, he was persuaded to leave only after a scuffle.)

One day recently, Laughlin said to me, "Nothing could dilute my affection for Pound. *Nothing* could. He was my soul's father. He was so wonderful to me. I shoved the rest of it under the rug. Others did, too." He paused, then said, referring to Pound's poem "Homage to Sextus Propertius," "I just can't hear those lines without getting chills up and down my spine—

> Shades of Callimachus, Coan ghosts of
>   Philetas
> It is in your grove I would walk,
> I who come first from the clear font
> Bringing the Grecian orgies into Italy."

FOR twenty-five years, starting in the forties, New Directions had a unique influence on a generation of readers and writers. The books, which were easily identifiable on the shelves because of their distinctive abstract jackets, designed by Alvin Lustig, and later by the black-and-white spines of the paperbacks, were especially prized by students. Harriet Sheridan, who helped arrange for Laughlin to give a series of lectures at Brown when she was dean of the college, in the mid-eighties, says, "When I was a graduate student, I would see a New Directions book in a friend's room and think, I have to have it. The books had a certain cachet: it meant that even if you were plowing through fifteenth-century manuscripts, you were keeping up." Jennifer Moyer, of Moyer Bell Limited, an independent publishing company that has recently brought out two volumes of Laughlin's prose, says, "My generation's consciousness has been formed by his decisions. No one had heard about William Carlos Williams when J was hawking his books out of the trunk of his car. When I got the manuscript of his 'Random Essays,' I thought, How can I be the editor of the man who has been editor of us all?"

The New Directions list from 1940 to 1955 reads like the canon of modernism: Thomas Merton, Henry Miller, Vladimir Nabokov, Ezra Pound, Kenneth Rexroth, Muriel Rukeyser, Delmore Schwartz, Gertrude Stein, Dylan Thomas, Tennessee Williams, William Carlos Williams, and Yvor Winters were represented, among others, often by more than one title. The roster of books in translation included Brecht, Céline, Éluard, Lorca, Mallarmé, Sartre, and Italo Svevo. In the fifties, Laughlin took a five-year leave from New Directions to edit a magazine called *Perspectives USA* for the Ford Foundation, which was then partly under the direction of his friend Robert Hutchins, the former president of the University of Chicago. Also for the Ford Foundation, Laughlin set up the Southern Indian Language Book Trust, which worked to publish and distribute books in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. New Directions was run in Laughlin's absence by Robert MacGregor, the house's managing director, with an efficiency that Laughlin speaks of even now with wonderment. The list remained full of good books, and it began to reflect Laughlin's growing interest in international writers: it included "Life of a Man," by Giuseppe Ungaretti, and Yukio Mishima's "Confessions of a Mask." By the late fifties and early sixties, Laughlin was publishing Beat poets—Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Gregory Corso. By the seventies, however, a certain falling off in New Directions' influence had become noticeable, explainable in part by its failure to publish any major American voice at that time (the editors were looking more and more toward literature in translation), and in part by the proliferation of inexpensive paperback books published by other firms, which loosened New Directions' hold on the student market. (New Directions entered the paperback market rather late, in 1956, behind Anchor, Vintage, and Meridian, among others.)

In the forties, Laughlin had started the New Classics series—reissues of books that had gone out of print, which New Directions leased from the original publishers. "You see, in the early days we were really doing two things at once," Laughlin told me one evening in Norfolk. "Very early on, we were trying to get these avant-garde people, but then the avant-garde people who came along weren't really that good. I was grasping for a tradition, but we wanted to have the reassurance of a backlist. When we began leasing books, Randall Jarrell said I was moving in every direction except forward. Henry James was mainly out of print, and one of the first ones we published, in 1943, was 'The Spoils of Poynton,' which we leased from Houghton Mifflin. Then came all his wonderful stories of writers and artists. Previously, we had leased

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'Three Lives,' by Stein, and we did two books by Forster—'A Room with a View' and 'The Longest Journey.' Fitzgerald was in a terrible eclipse, so we leased 'The Great Gatsby' from Scribners. These books were important for me, because while we were slashing around trying to find writers who would come to something—and while we were having trouble selling Williams and Pound, who now make up the backlist and enable us to do the younger writers—they did well. We didn't do such close accounting in those days, but I know they paid for themselves. I remember I complained to Thornton Wilder about the poor sales at New Directions, and he said, 'Just you wait, in a few years professors will be ordering your books.' This turned out to be true, but it was true of the New Classics first. It was always in my mind that the books that did well would help the ones that were limping. And you were protected by the reputations of those books. Anyway, a few of those books are still on the list. They're today's classics. As for the others, the original publishers revoked the leases when they saw that the books were doing so well. Professors hadn't been able to assign them, because they were out of print. And now they were *delighted* to be able to assign them in inexpensive editions, and at the price they were good impulse buys even if they weren't assigned."

I mentioned that in addition to a backlist Laughlin had also had the assurance that one day he would inherit a lot of money.

"Yes, I had that future cushion to look forward to. Without it, I would have been a professor, I imagine. For a long time, I was attracted to the medieval period—its combination of high society and warring impulses."

ALTHOUGH he now uses it rarely, Laughlin maintains a large but sparely furnished private office at the New Directions headquarters, on Fourteenth Street and Eighth Avenue in New York. The windows have wide-angle views of lower Manhattan and the harbor. The bookcases are filled with New Directions limited editions. Hanging on the wall is a print of the original New Directions colophon, designed by Henghes.

New Directions today is an eight-person house. Griselda Ohannessian, who has worked for Laughlin since the fifties, is the managing director, Peter Glassgold is editor-in-chief, and Peggy Fox is the senior editor. Many jobs are shared: the production manager handles permissions, which at New Directions is a big job. (As Laughlin puts it, when you lease twelve Tennessee Williams plays to New American Library, you get a trunkful of money.) The publicity director doubles as the business manager, and Peggy Fox copy-edits and takes care of foreign rights. At New Directions, as at Alta, Laughlin's method is to hire people he likes and trusts and then not have much to do with day-to-day operations. Batches of paper come up from the office to Norfolk twice a week, marked "U" and "Not U"—meaning, in Laughlin- rather than Mitfordese, "Urgent" and "Not Urgent." A copy of every contract goes up to Norfolk as well. The staff votes together on what books to publish, but in the end if Laughlin doesn't like a book it doesn't appear on the list. The reverse, though, is not always true. Books that Laughlin wants to do but that the staff thinks are too esoteric are done on something called the Proprietor's List, which Laughlin underwrites. "We make disastrous mistakes about that," Peggy Fox says. "We wouldn't do H.D., for example, and now *he's* making money on it!"

Today, New Directions publishes between twenty and thirty books a year. About three or four of these are reissues, such as the definitive two-volume edition of the poetry of William Carlos Williams, or books that are part of the Revived Modern Classics series, which recently brought out, for example, Joyce Cary's "Mister Johnson." Since 1979, the books have been distributed by W. W. Norton. (The press switched from using Harper & Row after a meeting at which the managers there referred to the books as "product.") The firm sells a good percentage of its books for college courses, but it has resisted pressure to ally itself with the university presses; for instance, it put off scholars who wanted the Williams volumes to appear with footnotes. Part of the resistance is against the outlay necessary for that kind of scholarly project, but more important is Laughlin's feeling that New Directions books are published for readers, and not for academics, whom Laughlin now and again refers to as "stooge college professors." The company did extremely well in the late sixties and early seventies—in large part because of the unexpected craze for Hermann Hesse's "Siddhartha," which sold a hundred thousand copies a year for several years. (Lawrence Ferlinghetti's "A Coney Island of the Mind" was another big hit, and Gary Snyder's "Turtle Island" was also an unexpected seller.) These days, the company continues to make money, although relatively little in some years. New Directions doesn't try to compete with what Ohannessian calls uptown advances, or with uptown salaries. As in Utah, where Chic Morton remembers Laughlin's telling him, "What you do to preserve Alta, you do for me," the staff at New Directions seems to have a unity of purpose combined with genuine fellow feeling. "No one's stuck ordering paper clips," says Ohannessian, who takes the staff's empty soda bottles down to the street herself. "Nowhere else would people have the same chance to use their imagination."

Extraordinary among publishing houses, New Directions seldom lets a book it has published go out of print. When Laughlin goes through the backlist and dismisses books that haven't sold a single copy in ten years, he calls it being hard-hearted. The press retains Laughlin's original mission of publishing good books, rather than a yearly best-seller list, and a celebratory mood prevails when a book sells even marginally more copies than in the previous year. "We have an Italian author, Antonio Tabucchi, who is just now beginning to get a little attention," Ohannessian says. "We've published four of his books, and if we sold two hundred cloth and seven hundred paper it was a lot. But now we sort of think his time has come. That has been the case with a few New Directions authors. And if their day hadn't come, New Directions probably wouldn't be in business. For example, when Pasternak won the Nobel Prize all that was in print besides "Dr. Zhivago" was a little New Directions paperback called "Safe Conduct." We're doing great with Octavio Paz. With Neruda and Montale, who also won Nobels, there was just a trickle of attention. But with Paz I called the warehouse, and thought, We're all right—we've got seven thousand copies of the six books we have. The warehouse called the next morning

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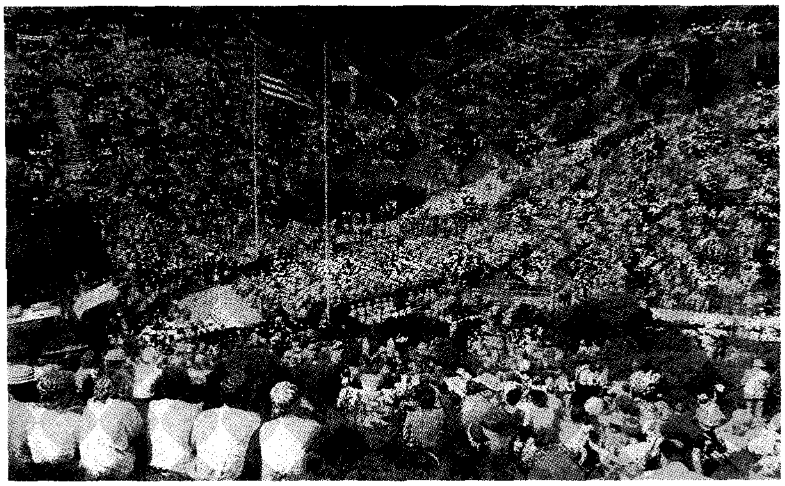

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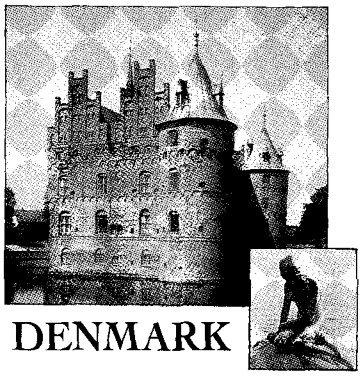

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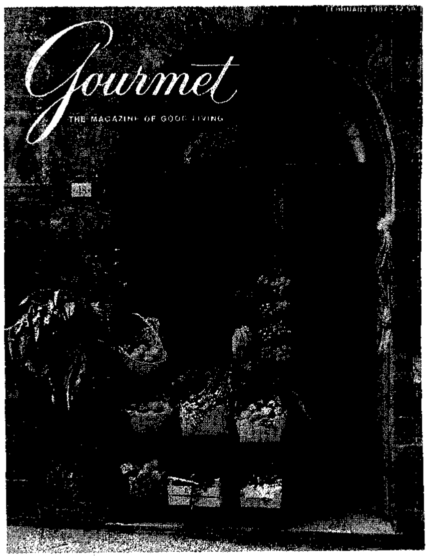

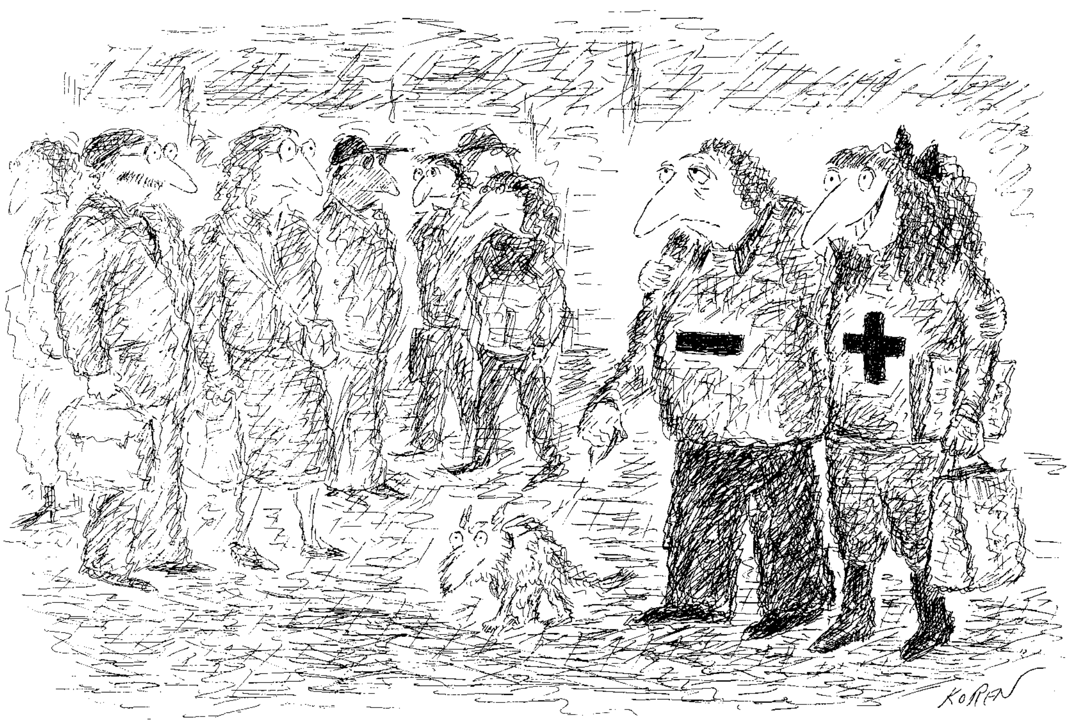

and said, 'They're gone.'"

One hot day during the summer, Laughlin came down to New York for an overnight stay. ("I'm going in to my doctor," he said in Norfolk the day before, "and I'm going to say, 'Ben, give me a New York pill.'") He and his wife planned to have dinner with friends, and he hoped to buy some shoes, but first he stopped by the New Directions office, where we met. He sat behind his desk and smoked a Montecruz cigar. The broad desk top was bare. He said, "The nice thing is that the staff doesn't seem to be working under any pressure. They're enjoying their work." He smiled. "When I was lecturing at Brown and I tried to explain the publishing business to the students, I told them that it wasn't at all what any of us thought it was going to be before we got into it. We thought it was sitting around in a club talking to a nice lady writer. It was grinding work. The upside of it was that if you had any luck you were dealing with important texts." He smiled again. "I loved teaching the girls."

I asked about the poet Stevie Smith, whom Griselda Ohannessian had been telling me about before Laughlin's arrival. In the sixties, New Directions did an edition of her "Selected Poems" in a run of three thousand copies. It took fifteen years to sell.

"We once went to visit Stevie, Ann and I," Laughlin said. "She lived way the heck out of London. You took the Underground to the end of the line, and then you took a big red bus. She gave us tea. She was fun. We met her aunt. She was such a *comfy* aunt." He shook his head, as if the very idea of a comfy aunt, given his experience with Aunt Leila, were a surprise to him. "They had a constant flow of details between them—you could see they lived off each other. Stevie was just like her poems were: if you were expecting her to say the cat is black, she would say the dog is green. There was this wonderful hopping in her mind."

He leaned back in his chair and puffed on the cigar. Here in New York, his occasional lethargy seemed to vanish, and he assumed the character of the successful businessman, telling stories off the cuff. "It was Henry Miller who put us on to 'Siddhartha.' When I first read it, I wrote to him that it was just sugared-over Buddhism, and I wasn't going to publish it. But Henry kept on writing, and I finally broke down and took it on in order to please him, and then it was as if God had sent a plague of good locusts to say to every young person that he had to read this book. The kids thought they were getting 'spirituality' and 'ethics.'" Laughlin raised a curved forefinger to indicate the quotation marks. "But then sometimes you get a really good book, and nothing happens. That's why it's interesting, I guess. But the prices now make it harder for young people to read a lot of literature, even with the trade paperbacks. You can't guess, though, what they'll be interested in." He exhaled, and made a face. "For a while, they were going for those children on an island."

"'Lord of the Flies'?" I asked.

"*Yes.* Ugh. But we had nothing to do with that."

"What about advertising?"

"It's curious about advertising," Laughlin said. "It works if people are already attracted to the books, because it points people to them. But our kind of reader isn't easily persuaded. Our readers tend to be picky. We rely on word of mouth. Ann's father would get on me about advertising, and I would say, 'It's useless, Mr. Resor,' and he would say, 'Maybe you're not doing the right kind of advertising.' Perhaps he was right. The average return from our mail-order catalogue is maybe three to four cents on the dollar, so that's worth doing. And if you do a catalogue and bait it with some discounted books, that's even better."

Laughlin is fascinated by any kind of printing. When a copying machine first arrived in Norfolk, he copied birch leaves, sticks, paper clips—anything that made an interesting pattern. Now he said, after handing me an early catalogue, "In the old days, the average printer thought he knew how the line should look, and he would monkey around with the line breaks. They were used to setting poetry boom-boom-boom down the page. We tried to avoid bad breaks, and little bits of verse carried over onto the next page. But Mr. Van Vechten, out in Metuchen, New Jersey, paid strict attention, and Bill Williams was so grateful to him. He played a part in 'Paterson.' The visual pattern was important to both Williams and Pound. Charles Olson has what he called a breath line. We turned it over and made it run long—that was a specific problem. Djuna Barnes, I remember, was concerned about the quality of paper used for her book 'Nightwood,' which New Directions reprinted in the New Classics series in 1946. Harcourt Brace had let it go out of print. She came into my office wearing her leopard coat and carrying her walking stick, and she said, 'I want an edition of "Nightwood" that will last a thousand years.' "

He paused. "In those days, publishing was as much a social contract as a money contract. I came along in the Depression, when publishers were having a hard time. I had a sense of mission—I felt I was saving the world from Bennett Cerf. And I would never think of lifting an author from another publisher. I have never to my knowledge lifted an author. I just believe that this musical chairs is no good. It may be making more money for the writers and the agents, but it's not good for them. But I have had many authors lifted from me, which has made me very bitter. There was this wonderful novel called 'The Sheltering Sky,' by Paul Bowles. No one would publish it. I did, and it went through seven printings, and then for the next book his agent sold him away. I was down on agents. I thought they were tearing after outrageous sums of money, sons of the Demon and of Mammon."

Later, when we were going down in the elevator (where Laughlin was almost eye level with the floor numbers above the door), I asked him whether he thought it was possible to make money in publishing.

"It can be done," he said, "if you have enough bad taste to do it. The moment you get above a certain level, you get into a lot of overhead you couldn't have imagined when you were the boy publisher on his bicycle. Twelve and a half million dollars to some detective writer! It's turning into a crap game. It used to be that publishing was something a gentleman could do. I think the real trashiness in publishing has come in the last ten or so years, with the television authors who write this gup. The minute you go for the mass audience, you have to lower your sights."

The elevator doors opened into a green marble lobby. "What's the psychological profile of these people who have to make all this money anyway?" Laughlin added as we headed toward the revolving door. "That's what I'd like to know. At J. & L., we were the fourth-largest company, and we reinvested the profits, and we stayed independent until twenty years ago. It's all gone. Ling-Temco, which bought us out, was started by this very humble man who began conglomerating, starting with small electronics companies. He was one of the first. These kinds of characters think they know more about finance than anyone else. Excessive arrogance. They are very impressed with their own knowledge of business, and they go bust, like what's-his-name. None of it would happen if they took care to make one piece fit."

Out on Eighth Avenue at midday, Laughlin was a striking presence: tall and elegant, in a Brooks Brothers blue poplin jacket and summer-weight flannels, both extremely old. With the help of a cane, which he had been prevailed upon to bring to New York, he walked south, in the direction of Bank Street, to the apartment he and Ann once kept, where he was to stay the night with the friends who had taken it over.

"Ann felt guilty about being rich, and she couldn't do enough to give things away," he said. "As a girl, she was embarrassed to be taken to school in a big Lincoln car, but the only reason Mr. Resor *had* the car was that J. Walter Thompson had the Ford advertising account, and Henry Ford had *given* it to him."

Throughout his publishing and personal life, James Laughlin has had the reputation of being close with a dollar; as a child, at the Presbyterian church in Pittsburgh, where his uncle was the minister, he put five cents in the collection plate, or less if no one was looking, and he remembers thinking that that was all God needed. He is among those publishers who, while proclaiming the value of good literature, paid writers next to nothing for their work, and apparently believed—in an amorphous, never-quite-spelled-out way—that money wasn't good for writers.

Laughlin uses monetary terms in conversation, saying something is "on the money," or that a friend "gives good value." Lady Maria St. Just, who is Tennessee Williams' literary executor, and to whom Laughlin was engaged years ago, says of Laughlin, "In the forties, he was *very* parsimonious. One day, I bought him eight ties, one for every day of the week and two for Sunday, and he said, 'My God, the extravagance! What are you going to do with all my money?' I didn't know he had any money. He was just this tall, handsome man. My mother called him the '*chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*.' I said, 'Why, spend it, of course.' He would take the humblest room in the smallest hotel, but once, recently, when my handbag was stolen in New York he took me straight to Hermès and bought me a beautiful new one."

"He is *pretend* parsimonious," says Drue Heinz. "On the slopes, if he and Jack had a good cigar and they weren't going to have time to smoke it on the lift, they would cut it in half and share it. It was a tremendous joke. But he never did fund-raising for writers. Never. It was just casually mentioned. He did call, though, when Dylan Thomas died. The body had to be taken back by plane to Ireland, or wherever it was. Wales. He just made you know what had to be done."

"Do you feel bad when you lose money?" I asked Laughlin that day on the way to Bank Street.

He shook his head. "I have an obsession with money, watching it grow, watching it slide. But no. It's like a wave on the beach. It comes in and goes out. If I lost so much that I felt crippled by not being able to do what I wanted to do, then perhaps I would."

AN Indian summer day in Norfolk. Laughlin and I are talking about this and that, deciding whether it is too cold to swim. Before we can go anywhere, a neighbor is coming by with his college-age son, who wants "to go into publishing." Laughlin receives him in the kitchen. Even in this setting, the young man seems in awe of Laughlin, who in addition to everything else is so—well, *tall.*

Laughlin takes the young man in all at once. "Work in a bookstore for a few months," he says, "and then get a job as a road salesman. You can learn an enormous amount from booksellers. I learned a lot from the predominantly lady booksellers of the Midwest. And don't go to business school. That's just about throwing money around in different directions to see if it explodes."

"These young people," Laughlin says to me about half an hour later, "they have the taste, the energy. But I say to them, 'Don't start up a company unless you have two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to keep you going.' "

We decide to go for a walk instead of a swim—to the building Laughlin calls the barn, an old nineteen-twenties gray building that Laughlin's son Henry and his wife, Carlene, are winterizing to use when they come up from the city on weekends. As we're preparing to go, Laughlin stops in the dining room and glances at some paintings there that have been taken down from the walls and are face up on the dining-room table. "Here's that *dark* Klee, and this Henry Moore." He grins. "I'm going to sell both of them to help pay the taxes."

We walk past the sheep barn, through the woods, up past Robin Hill. Although he can be unsteady, Laughlin never looks at his feet. "Now, there's trumpet lily, and vetch," he says, as we make our way through the meadow. He stops to peer through the brush at Aunt Leila's long, red brick house, which is now owned by the interior designer John Saladino. "There's a Cy Twombly where Grandmother's picture used to be," he says. "Ann wouldn't live there, because she thought she could hear Aunt Leila in the attic."

"Did you regret leaving Robin Hill?" I ask. (Laughlin lived there until he married Margaret Keyser.)

"Yeah, I regretted it, because I love beautiful things. My aunt would sit out on the loggia and look out into the forest. The house was not hostile to people, it accepted people. My workroom, where I wrote letters, was on the third floor."

In the barn, there is a shelf of figurines depicting incarnations of Vishnu. Laughlin picks up each one in turn, as if greeting them.

"Do you have a favorite?" I ask.

"No, I like them all. I used to collect porcelain birds, but some child must have taken 'em."

We walk back to Meadow House

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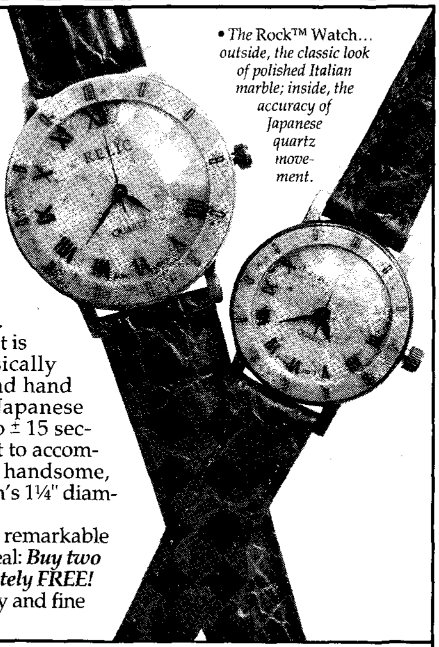

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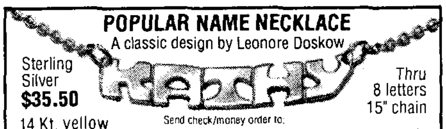
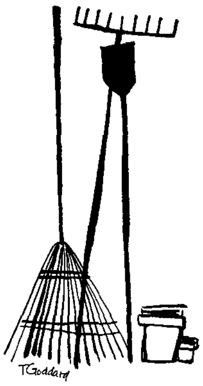


through the fields Laughlin cleared. Back in the living room, he sits at right angles to the view Pound was looking out on when he agreed to let young Henry Laughlin call him Nonno. In recent years, flouting Pound's advice to give up writing poetry, Laughlin has been publishing his poems; between them, Copper Canyon Press and City Lights have brought out four of Laughlin's books. A volume of his poems translated into French, "Ce que le crayon écrit," won the Prix Malrieu in 1986, and his poems frequently appear in little magazines. Laughlin often composes his poems so that there are the same number of typed characters per line. He can say anything he wants, but within a rigid, self-imposed structure. Originally, it was William Carlos Williams, he has said, who told him to try messing around on the typewriter.



"The result is certainly visual," Laughlin says now, of his verse, "but you get an interesting syncopation." He is quiet for a long moment, and then says, "My poems embarrass the children terribly. The children cringe. I raised up a bunch of squares. They would never read anything I suggested to them."

"What are you reading now?" I ask.

"A dandy book about Sir Richard Burton, the man who went to find the source of the Nile. My favorite author is still Flaubert, not 'Salammbô' but the regular ones—'Sentimental Education' and the one about the girl who behaved so badly."

The telephone rings on the table next to where Laughlin is sitting. He answers it, listens for a minute, and then says, "Yes, people are getting tired of those concrete boots that'll cut your head off if you fall the wrong way. What are your means of access? I see." He pauses. "There's no airfield? That sounds nice." Pause. "Or what? They'll go other places? So they'll go to Deer Valley. No, we've got to keep some virgin snow so the powder lovers can ski it." Pause. "If you've got something good, stick with it. Don't be Donald *Trump*." Hanging up, he says to me, "That's the Texas mentality. People write and call, and we always tell them the same thing: there is no stock for sale at Alta. Dick Bass called—he owns Snowbird—and I told him there was all this nice land for sale just down the canyon." He looks out the window, and says, as if in explanation, "I like to keep the woods neat."

"How do you think you knew what you wanted to do?" I ask.

"It was easy. Ever since I got into the hands of Dudley Fitts, I knew I wanted to be a writer, or have something to do with books. I would have liked to have been a good Greek scholar. Ezra always said Greek was the most important language for poetry. That, and that a poet who doesn't like music is a bad poet. I'm a revenant—I'm someone returning from the classical age with the sentimentality and aspirations of that age. But I think there's a period of general literary flourishing in the world right now. I never understood why there was so much good writing in the Elizabethan period, but what can it be except that writers get exposed to good writing? How else do you account for Eliot, Pound, Williams, and Faulkner all coming up together? There were facilities to recognize them, to publish them. One good writer leads to another. 'You're an élitist publisher'—people threw that at me. Well, that's fine with me."

A few black-faced sheep have come up from the meadow to the garden fence. "Aunt Leila, she knew about life," Laughlin says. "She knew how people should behave. Pretty much, though, I shaped my life as I went along. Alta has been my major contribution. With New Directions, I give pleasure to how many people a day? With Alta, I give pleasure to four thousand. In a way, it's all of a piece. In skiing, the dance quality goes into it—when you're doing an unheard rhythm, when you're doing it right." He stops, then quotes a line from one of Pound's favorite troubadour poets. "*Doutz brais e critz*," he says. " 'The sweet short sound of birds.' Now, *there's* a language about sounds. Alta always annoyed the writers, because they thought I was out there skiing, not thinking of them, and they were right." He makes a face at one of the sheep. "But you know, I always had this great urge to be dancing down the mountain."

—CYNTHIA ZARIN

LETTER FROM MOSCOW

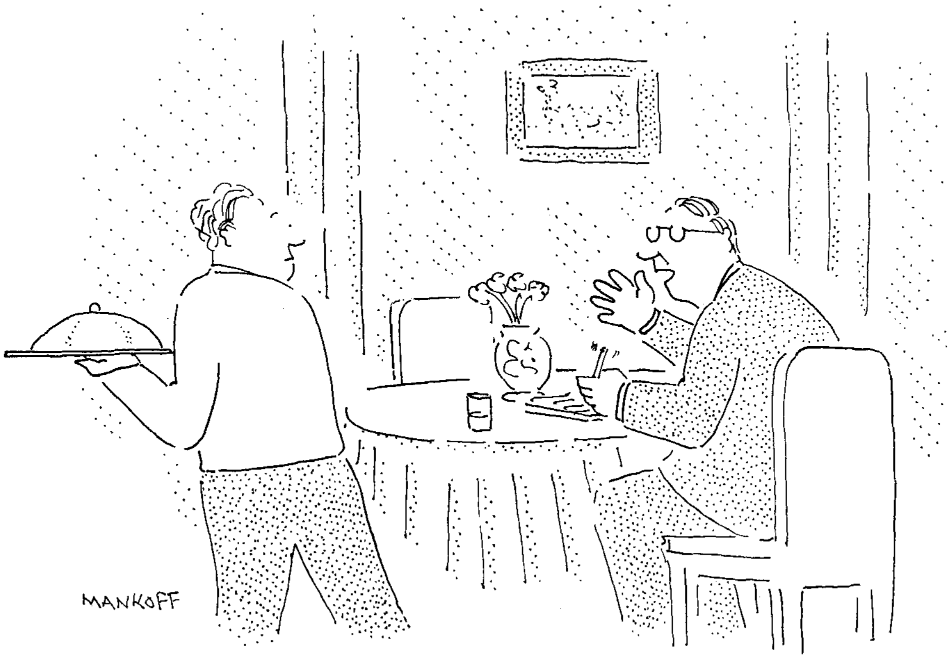
At his dacha in the woods outside Moscow, Mikhail Gorbachev climbed into the back seat of a Zil limousine and headed north, toward the Kremlin. It was the morning after Christmas, and suddenly the Soviet Union was a half-remembered dream and its last general secretary a pensioner. Gorbachev wanted to take care of some final meetings and clean out his desk before starting a few weeks of vacation. The Russian government had promised him a peaceful day or two before it took up residence in the Kremlin. But when he arrived at his office he saw that his nameplate had already been pried off the wall. "Yeltsin, Boris Nikolaevich" was there, gleaming brassily, in its place. Inside the office, Yeltsin was sitting behind the desk. For days, there had been an air of self-pity about Gorbachev, and this petty incident seemed to transform it into fury. Never mind Gorbachev's own assaults on Yeltsin over the years. "For me, they have poisoned the air," he complained to a reporter. "They have humiliated me."

This was a historic moment in Moscow: for the first time, an elected President occupying the Kremlin; the hammer and sickle gone from the flagpole; the regime and the empire dissolved. And yet history felt like nothing more than a miserable winter day; the Western press corps roamed Red Square in search of passion or comment. "You care, we don't," an old woman from the provincial city of Tver told a clutch of reporters. With that, she stormed off in search of potatoes and milk for her family.

In the afternoon, Gorbachev's press secretary, Andrei Grachev, invited a small group of aides, foreign reporters, and Russian editors to a reception at the Oktyabrskaya Hotel. A farewell party, Grachev called it, and he could not have chosen a more appropriate stage. For years, the hotel, across the street from the French Embassy, was a symbol of the Communist Party's kitschy opulence. The lobby and the dining rooms are heavy on marble and mirrors. Every fixture, it seems, was designed with a certain solicitude for the aging members of the Central Committee—feudal lords of the provinces—who would visit Moscow a few times a year for their plenary sessions and shopping sprees. The Communist Party discovered in its dying days that its financial situation had declined dramatically, and that the only solution was the quick sale of its assets. The Oktyabrskaya Hotel, once known to Muscovites as the Waldorf-Astoria of the Central Committee, is now open for the high-end tourist trade.

At a few minutes before five o'clock, the reporters and the editors stood waiting at the top of the marble stairs for Gorbachev to arrive. By chance, I took my place near two of the city's best-known newspaper editors: Len Karpinsky, the editor-in-chief and a columnist of the weekly *Moscow News*; and Vitaly Tretyakov, a young defector from *Moscow News*, who had started *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (*Independent Newspaper*), the closest thing Russia has ever had to a Western daily. Standing there, I was struck by the fact that Gorbachev's resignation meant a transition from Karpinsky's generation of intellectual idealists to a breed of younger men and women like Tretyakov—business neophytes, scholars, hustlers, newspaper editors—who would build a new world not so much out of the jagged ruins of the old experiment as out of fragmentary notions gathered from the West.

Karpinsky is what Muscovites call a *shestidesyatnik*—someone who came of age in the early nineteen-sixties, during the exhilarating thaw under Nikita Khrushchev, and grew disillusioned when Soviet tanks crushed the Prague Spring, in 1968. That generation harbored the dream of a humane socialism in Russia. Its members did not dare take the risks of full-blown dissidence but found a measure of independence and sanity in their work. There were scholars who fled the oppressive scrutiny of Moscow for institutes in provincial cities from Tartu to Novosibirsk; there were journalists who fled *Pravda* for Prague and wrote for *Problems of Peace and Socialism*. Some *shestidesyatniki* even found it possible to work and think in small, relatively liberal pockets of the Communist Party apparatus in Moscow. Karpinsky first met Gorbachev thirty years ago, when both were prominent in the Komsomol, the Young Communist League. Shared hints of dissatisfaction, of irony, made them comrades of a sort. But Karpinsky was both ambitious and angry, and he had long since veered into the dangerous terrain of what he always called "my life as a half-dissident." Gorbachev's appearance as a leader of reform, in 1985, was what Karpinsky had been waiting for all his adult life. Under Gorbachev, Karpinsky went from disgrace to rehabilitation, then on to real stardom in the new world of journalism. When Gorbachev, in the last months of his rule, made serious miscalculations and



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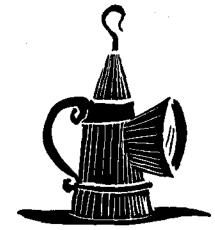
proved unable to act decisively against the hard-liners who eventually placed him under house arrest for three days in the Crimea, Karpinsky quit the Party and put his hopes in Yeltsin. Yet that conversion, after the assault on Lithuania, in January of 1991—a conversion nearly unanimous among the Moscow intellectuals of Karpinsky's age and background—was a kind of afterword, a coda to the failed dream of *perestroika*. Now, as Gorbachev was leaving center stage, so was Karpinsky. *Moscow News*, which had broken one taboo after another in the first years of *perestroika*, had become a tired paper: still interesting at times, still honest, but one that spoke to a generation that now seemed, with Gorbachev, exhausted.



"It's good that Gorbachev's leaving now, but I am moved to the core," Karpinsky told me. "How can I deny that I have just finished the most important chapter of my life?"

That day in Moscow, Vitaly Tretyakov was thirty-nine years old—a quarter of a century younger than Karpinsky. In just one year, Tretyakov had developed a paper totally alien to what had been the Soviet Union. From its first issue, in December of 1990, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* had never known government interference or censorship, and its language was free of ideology. The first issue appeared just as Eduard Shevardnadze resigned as Foreign Minister and made his uncanny prediction of an incipient dictatorship. The paper's coverage of the rise of the hard-line counter-revolution and the August coup was unmatched. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* combination of news, conflicting commentaries, highbrow essays, and satire made *Moscow News* seem hopelessly earnest and a little antique. While the pages of *Moscow News* were filled with the avuncular columns and the hand-wringing of old and worn-out men, reporters in their twenties at *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* were filching Party documents, printing the confessions of military spies, and conducting irreverent interviews with government leaders. Tretyakov gave free rein to people like Tatyana Malkina, who is twenty-four years old and once worked as a researcher at *Moscow News*. At a news conference held by the eight conspirators during the August coup, Malkina asked the most penetrating question of the hour. Fixing her eyes on the half-drunk pretender to power, Gennadi Yanayev, she said, "Tell me, please, do you realize that you have carried out a state coup? And which comparison would you find more appropriate—1917 or 1964?" Yanayev's hand began to quiver uncontrollably as he careered through his reply.

"I'm supposed to be young, but sometimes I feel a hundred years old when I watch what my reporters dare to do," Tretyakov told me later. "They are the first generation that knows no fear. Journalism is not a mission for them, as it was for us at *Moscow News*. It's a terrific game."

It was now five o'clock, and everyone at the top of the stairs was looking down, to see if Gorbachev would appear. Then the front doors opened and a few of Gorbachev's closest advisers walked through—owlish little men in mouse-gray overcoats, among them Aleksandr Yakovlev, Georgi Shakhnazarov, and Anatoly Chernyaev. These were the bookish apparatchiks who had warned Gorbachev of the enemies in their midst, and had failed, ultimately, to penetrate their man's gigantic, and tragic, self-possession. Just behind them was Gorbachev, wearing a coat the color of smoke. He looked up at the crowd and seemed embarrassed; there was something feeble in his smile. For years, he had played the press corps so easily. At first, it was enough that he was ambulatory and reasonably fluent in his own language—that he was not Brezhnev or Chernenko—but with time it was clear as well that he had an apparently effortless ability to connect, to seem to recognize a face in a crowd. And he had the gifts of surprise and agility. Now, at the end, if he was going to remain a force in politics and become Yeltsin's moderate opposition he would want to give a decent performance at this reception. As Gorbachev shed his coat and began climbing the stairs, the reporters and the photographers began applauding; the applause was hesitant at first, but then it grew louder, and the sound reverberated from the marble and the high windows. Gorbachev clasped his hands together and shook them, more relieved than triumphant.

In a reception room, near tables covered with huge platters of smoked fish and roasted meats, Gorbachev gave a wheezy little speech, made all the worse by a horrendous public-address system. His clichés about the great missions of the past few years came out like the muffled, echoing announcements at a bowling alley. His aides looked bored and weary. But then, with that ritual over, Gorbachev threw himself into the event with gusto. He polished off a shot of lemon vodka and a slice of pickled herring, dangling the herring between forefinger and thumb and dropping it onto his tongue. In a voice of tricked-up cheer, he held his glass up to the guests and the cameras and said, "You think I can't do it, but now I can afford to." As Gorbachev worked the room, moving from one cluster of questioners to another, he made it clear that he had no intention of fading away. "I have big plans," he said. "I am not leaving the political scene." The later it got, the more pointed his gibes about his successors became. "I just could not go on," he said. "Everything I did in the last few months, Yeltsin was always opposing. There was just no way. No way. It's easy to be against Gorbachev, always against Gorbachev all the time. They have always been in opposition. So now I'm gone. There's no one for them to oppose. So now let them do what they can."

THE transition in Russia these past few months has been far more profound than the turn from Gorbachev to Yeltsin. Genuine democracy is only now in the making, and economic reform remains a distant hope. So far, the great change in Russia has been one of mind and attitude.

The regime knew that it could not modernize without entering the age of information. And it was information—the truth about Soviet history and the failure of ideology—that brought an end to the regime. In the first years of *perestroika*, the intellectual, spiritual, and journalistic leaders of that change of mind were the *shestidesyatniki*—men and women like Karpinsky, idealists who suddenly provided an open, civil discourse where there had been none. In the past year, these people have given way to the new generation, less encumbered by the past or by self-doubt, more hardheaded, cynical, practical. Its members are businessmen who travel to Europe for weekend meetings; young academics specializing in the works of Hayek, Mill, and Burke; journalists who find their models

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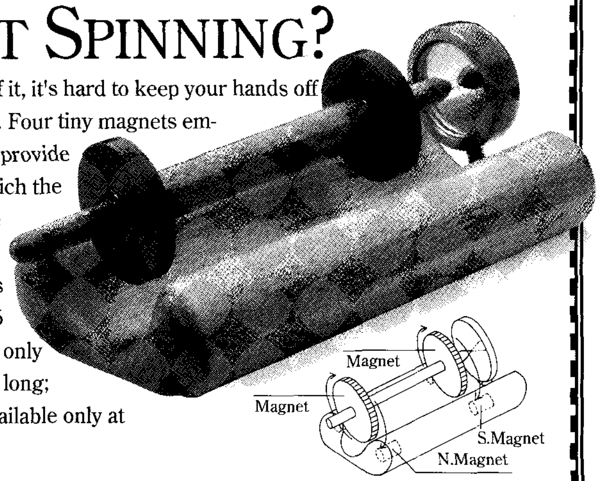

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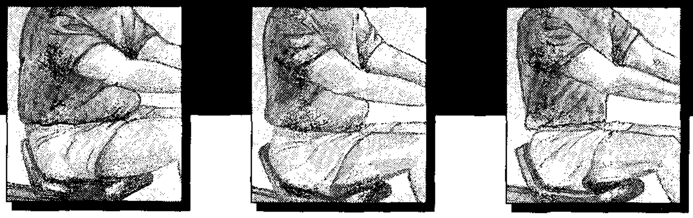

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in American investigative reporters and, not infrequently, the New York *Post.* The transition in journalism from *Moscow News* to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* was perhaps the quickest and most visible of these shifts. To witness Len Karpinsky's transformations—in print and in person—over the Party, socialism, and Gorbachev, and then to confront an army of kids, untroubled by the murk of ideology or by the censor's pen, was to get a sense of the transition of Russian generations which is now in play.

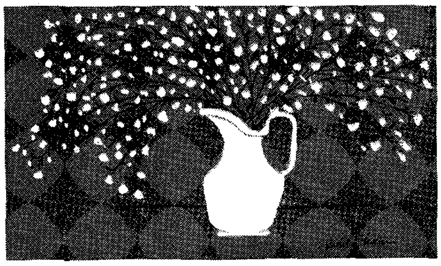
Len Karpinsky's parents were Old Bolsheviks. He was named in honor of his father's mentor and friend Lenin. " 'Len' was pretty common then, and so was 'Ninel'—'Lenin' backward—or 'Vladilen,' for Vladimir Ilyich Lenin," Karpinsky told me at his office one afternoon. "I'm just glad I didn't get a name like 'Elektrifikatsiya' or some others my friends were stuck with."

Karpinsky's father, Vyacheslav Karpinsky, belonged to a generation of revolutionary romantics, the fin-de-siècle Communists. He joined the Communist Party in 1898, and in 1903, after his activities as a political organizer got him into trouble with the police in the Ukrainian city of Kharkov, he went into foreign exile, according to an interview that was published in "Voices of Glasnost," by Stephen F. Cohen and Katrina vanden Heuvel. In Switzerland, he became Lenin's aide and copy editor. In Moscow, after the revolution, he helped Lenin assemble his personal archives and held various posts at *Pravda* and the Central Committee's Department of Propaganda. He received three Orders of Lenin, and in 1962 became the first journalist ever named a Hero of Socialist Labor.

For the Karpinsky family, a life in revolution provided an elevated existence. From 1932 to 1952, they lived in the famous House on the Embankment—a huge pile across the river from the Kremlin. Other tenants were the Kremlin élite: generals, Central Committee members, agents of the secret police. There were special dining halls stocked with groceries of a sort unknown to the rest of the socialist paradise. There were billiard halls, swimming pools, and, for the children, Special School No. 19. When Len Karpinsky was a boy, he was friendly with a couple of Stalin's nephews. At a birthday party once, Stalin appeared in a doorway. "Children!" one of the adults announced. "Joseph Vissarionovich is here!" Stalin waved and smiled. The children all waited in silence until he left, and then resumed their games.

That was in 1935. In the coming years, Karpinsky watched dumbstruck as one after another of his friends in the building lost parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents to Stalin's purges. Nearly every night, secret-police vans would arrive and there would be arrests—an admiral, a lecturer on Marxism-Leninism, the sisters of a spy in a foreign embassy. "There was a knock and then they disappeared," Karpinsky said. It had been the world of Yuri Trifonov's novella "The House on the Embankment"—a world where "a life went on that was utterly different" from the life of ordinary people. Now it was a world where the most devoted revolutionaries, the most obsequious ministers, suddenly found themselves declared "plotters" and "infiltrators" and "enemies of the people." Karpinsky's family was, by the standards of the building, not hard hit. One of his aunts and her two brothers were sent off to the camps. To this day, Karpinsky does not quite understand why his father, the very sort of Lenin loyalist who so threatened Stalin, was not arrested and executed. The only reason he can think of now, he says, is that by 1937 or 1938 his father was semi-retired and out of politics.

FROM the moment I moved to Moscow, in January of 1988, until leaving, four years later, I read *Moscow News,* and particularly Karpinsky, avidly. Everyone did. The leadership had installed Karpinsky's old friend Yegor Yakovlev as editor-in-chief of the newspaper in 1986, and almost from that point it was clear that *Moscow News* would be the paper of the thaw generation, the one that would subtly break the taboos formed over seventy years. From time to time, I visited Karpinsky at the *Moscow News* office, on Pushkin Square, and he always seemed to me an honest man, if a limited writer—a representative figure, whose life had been, as he remarked to me, "an inner conflict between the ambition to be a boss in the Communist Party and the almost involuntary development of a conscience." His appearance today, waxen and drawn, speaks of that struggle. His face is long, lined, and worn. The fingers of his right hand are yellowed up to the first knuckle, from tobacco. More often than not, when I called and asked how he was he would say dryly, "My health is awful. I'm spending the week in a sanatorium. I may die."



Karpinsky is so unassuming, and so ironic about his own failures and hesitations, that it is hard to believe he was once an ambitious Communist, a dutiful apparatchik who believed deeply in Communism and in himself—in his entitlement to success. After entering Moscow State University, in 1947, he began working as a "propaganda man" at factories and construction sites during the days before the Party's single-candidate elections. "My assignment was to make the workers get up at 6 A.M. and go to the polls," he told me one afternoon. "There was a competition among the propaganda men over whose group would be the first to finish voting. The deadline was midday, by which time the whole Soviet people was supposed to have voted. That was a decision of the Party. We eighteen-year-olds were supposed to carry on propaganda among the workers, and our only tool was the promise to improve their housing conditions. They lived in horrible slums, or in railway cars, with no toilets, no heat. I loved the work, thought it was a great service—and, yes, a stepping stone. At the university, Yuri Levada, who is now a well-known sociologist, wrote an article about me called 'The Careerist.' And it was true. I did it all with the idea of getting to the top. That was what it was all about—to be one of the bosses."

After a pause, Karpinsky ground out a cigarette and went on, "But, having said that, I have to say a few words in self-defense. Society during the Stalin era left open no real opportunities for self-realization or self-expression except within this perverted system of the Communist Party. The system destroyed all the other channels—the artist's canvas, the farmer's land. All that was left was the gigantic hierarchic system of the Party, wide at the base and growing narrower as one climbed to the top. You had to have a Party membership just for admission. That was your only opportunity. When you are engaged in that work, you forget about the social and political implications and just do it. Gradually, though, this sort of life bifurcates your mind, your intellect. You do eventually begin to understand that life is life and it's better to do something good for thy neighbor than to climb upward stepping on his bones. It all depends on moral principles. I suppose my first doubts came when I went to Moscow State University. A Jewish friend of mine named Karl Kantor was attacked by the university's Party committee at the beginning of Stalin's anti-Jewish campaign. That was just the start of a long transformation.

98¢
YOUR CHOICE

"After graduation, I was sent to the city of Gorki for Komsomol work. At that point, Stalin had one more year to live. I got to know the working class and the peasants in Gorki. I saw the utter degradation, the ruin. I saw Soviet society as it had really emerged. Some people still think, erroneously, that the life of the apparatchik breeds only conformists and subjects loyal to the regime. Actually, the regime splits people into two opposing factions—those who believe they can make it only through conformism and timeserving, and those who, thanks to a different structure of mind, dare to question the surrounding reality."

He paused again, and then said, "So when Stalin died I realized perfectly well what he had been all about. Still, I went to the funeral in Moscow, out of curiosity. I felt like one of those prisoners in the camps who threw their hats in the air and cried, 'The man-eater has finally kicked the bucket!' My father's reaction to Stalin's death was interesting. By then, he was retired, working for the Central Committee only as a consultant. He sat there in his office, typing on an old Underwood, which he had brought from the offices he shared with Lenin in Switzerland. He called me into his study and said, 'Son, Comrade Stalin has passed away. And, having been an epigone of Lenin, he created all the necessary conditions for our cause to triumph.' It was so strange. My father had never before in his life talked so formally to me. I think he talked that way because his generation had always carried the burden of promoting the Party line at all times, and he felt that it was his duty to pass that down to his children. But this was a man, eighty years old, who had conceived his idea of the Party before the revolution and while living in exile. He had to convince not me but himself. He was talking to himself."

When Karpinsky returned from Gorki to Moscow for good, in 1959, Khrushchev was the general secretary, and the thaw was in full swing. *Novy Mir*, Aleksandr Tvardovsky's monthly journal of literature and opinion, was publishing texts critical of the old regime. Khrushchev himself read Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich," and sanctioned its publication in *Novy Mir*. Karpinsky's friends Yevgeny Yevtushenko and Andrei Voznesensky were winning a following with their foppish lyrics and performances. In various pockets of the Central Committee apparatus, young apparatchiks wrote proposals and outlines of economic and political reform—though all within certain boundaries of ideology and language. Karpinsky, for his part, worked as the head of the Komsomol's Department of Propaganda and Agitation and as the editor of *Molodoi Kommunist* (*Young Communist*). Then, in 1962, he joined the empyrean of the adult Communist world. He was promoted to *Pravda's* editorial board, to head the department of Marxism-Leninism. He had made it.

"Once I was back in Moscow from Gorki, my critical approach weakened somewhat," Karpinsky said. "I was part of the élite again, and not merely as my father's son but as a real member. I was part of the top *nomenklatura*, and the *nomenklatura* is another planet. It's Mars. It's not simply a matter of good cars or apartments. It's the continuous satisfaction of your own exclusivity; it's the way an army of bootlickers allows you to work for hours. All the little apparatchiks are ready to do everything for you. Your every wish is fulfilled. You can go to the theatre on a whim, you can fly to Japan from your hunting lodge. It's a life in which everything flows easily. No, you don't own a yacht or spend your vacations on the Côte d'Azur, but you are at the

TALES OF AN ART DEALER

IGNACIO ZULOAGA (1870-1945)

Gifted Artist or Hypemaster?

Few people today would recognize the name of Spanish painter Ignacio Zuloaga (1870-1945). Yet in his 1925 show at Vose Galleries, over 22,000 devotees viewed the exhibition, a record for attendance that still stands. "The excitement of this week will be the opening at the Vose Gallery of the large exhibition of paintings by Zuloaga, admirable and admired painter" proclaimed the Boston Herald. "To have secured the Zuloagas is an achievement upon which Mr. Vose will long receive congratulations." Articles on Zuloaga appeared in the *New York Times, New York Times Magazine, Town and Country,* and *International Studio.*

America's most popular artist, John Singer Sargent, praised Zuloaga's "genius" and eminent art critic, Dr. Christian Brinton, raved in the show catalog: "Peopled with matadors, and tianeros, sensuous gitanas, cynical priests and seductive women of society, these canvases are instinct with passion and fatalism. It is through gazing into the spectrum of his own soul that is destined to endure."

But this art did not endure, plunging into obscurity after the artist's death. After a 1991 retrospective exhibition of his work, a reviewer in *Connoisseur* wondered "why this once important figure has been relegated to such minor status" and speculated that the painter was eclipsed by Modernism or that some of his works descended to "sheer kitch". Others speculate that his personal magnetism was more a cause of his acclaim than his talent, or that his sensual nudes were a magnet for the huge crowds, or that romanticizing all things Spanish obscured critical evaluation.

Ignacio Zuloaga — gifted artist or hypemaster? We can add only one maxim that has guided us for over 150 years: The popularity of an artist is as difficult to predict as the weather.

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Black Sea, and that is really something. The issue is your relative well-being. You are like a king: just point your finger and it is done."

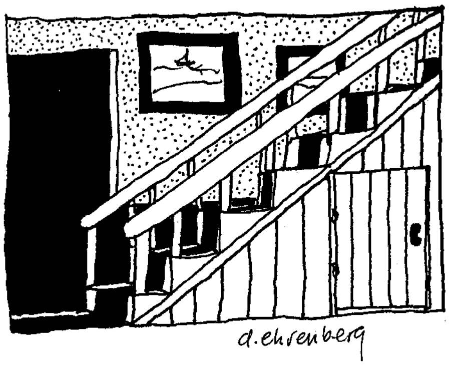
Karpinsky's potential as a man of the Communist Party élite was unlimited. It is conceivable that he could have won eventual appointment to the Politburo. He was a Soviet Ivy Leaguer: bright, ambitious, a Legacy. One afternoon, at a Kremlin ceremony, two of Khrushchev's most powerful partners in the leadership, Mikhail Suslov and Boris Ponomarev, called Karpinsky their golden boy, their comer. One of them said that Karpinsky was like "a son of the regiment" to them, and that they saw for him a great future in the ideological department of the Communist Party. "We are pinning our hopes on you," Suslov said.

Working in that rarefied atmosphere, Karpinsky got to know nearly every figure who would make a difference (one way or the other) during *perestroika*. He was friendly with Yegor Yakovlev, the Lenin biographer, who became the editor of *Moscow News;* Yuri Karyakin, a Dostoyevski scholar, who was among the leading radical deputies in the Congress of People's Deputies; Aleksandr Bovin, the gargantuan journalist who propagandized the "new thinking" in foreign policy at *Izvestia;* the reform-minded economists Gavriil Popov and Nikolai Shmelyov and the sociologist Yevgeny Ambartsumov; Otto Latsis, the son of an Old Bolshevik and an editor at *Kommunist;* Gennadi Yanayev and Boris Pugo, who helped lead the August coup; and even the leading triumvirate of reform, Eduard Shevardnadze, Aleksandr Yakovlev, and Mikhail Gorbachev.

"I first met Gorbachev when I was working at *Pravda* and he was in Stavropol working in the Komsomol organization there," Karpinsky said. "He was not very well known at the time, but I must tell you that Gorbachev was saying the same things then that he said at the beginning of *perestroika*. He was in Moscow on some business trip or other—I forget what it was about—but we met for a couple of hours, and I was impressed. He talked about the outrage of paying combine operators by their mileage, and not by their output. To put it in a nutshell, he spoke about the absurd system of incentives, or lack of them, in the economy. He was excitable but somehow very rational. And for the first two or three years of *perestroika* Gorbachev was the same sort of innovator he had been when he was young. The innovative projects were always limited, within certain boundaries, and that, of course, was significant later on. Well, I understand him. Like all of us, Gorbachev had to have a dual nature. It was in his mind, in his soul. He knew well that the idea of reward for work well done was considered out of the ordinary but not quite heretical. You could experiment with something limited like that. But we were not allowed to make any political or philosophical conclusions suggesting that the system itself was a failure. In your mind, you avoided such conclusions. You were simply incapable of thinking that way. To think that way was not only career suicide but a form of despair. And so, like the rest of us, Gorbachev hedged—outwardly and within himself."

KARPINSKY and his friends were at first not much upset by Brezhnev and Suslov's overthrow of Khrushchev, in 1964. When Karpinsky heard the news, he and Yegor Yakovlev celebrated over a bottle of cognac. Khrushchev had long since tightened restrictions on the press and the arts, and had become prone to unpredictable decisions—a manic "voluntarism," as the Party language had it. Only years later, when Khrushchev was a sad old man living in exile at his dacha, did Karpinsky call him, to wish him well on his birthday. Karpinsky said that he was calling on behalf of "the children of the Twentieth Party Congress," and that Khrushchev should know that one day history would make clear to everyone the importance of that session, in 1956, at which he levelled his first attacks against Stalin's "cult of personality."

"I have always believed this, and I am very pleased that you and your relatively young generation understand the essence of the Twentieth Congress and the policies I initiated," Khrushchev replied. "I am so happy to hear from you in my twilight years."



It did not take Karpinsky or anyone else long to realize that Brezhnev had no intention of making reforms. Just the opposite. A neo-Stalinist movement was in the works. One night at dinner with Yevtushenko and Otto Latsis, Karpinsky began to speak out about what was happening to his generation, to its cast of mind. "Our idea was this: when one has an education in philosophy and a certain intellectual background, one begins to understand the inner properties of reality—something I termed intellectual conscience," he told me. "It's not a natural, inborn conscience but a conscience that stems from a kind of thinking that links you with a moral attitude toward reality. If you understand that everything in this society is soaked in blood, that the society itself is heading toward collapse, that it is all an anti-human system—if you understand this instinctively and intellectually—then your conscience cannot remain neutral. Look, I never really took any risks, and didn't want to. I was sort of compelled by my conscience to take what steps I did. And, once compelled to take those steps, I could never foresee the bad consequences. Every time, I thought I'd get away with it. And, every time, I didn't."

Karpinsky made his first real foray into the netherworld of "half-dissent" in 1967, and it was a personal disaster. He and a friend at *Pravda*, Fyodor Burlatsky, wrote an article in *Komsomolskaya Pravda* calling, in a euphemistic way, for an easing of censorship in the theatre. Karpinsky now says that the piece was "half-rotten," especially its solipsistic arguments that the best way to eliminate anti-Soviet sentiments from the theatre would be to let the people, and not the official censors, decide. That way, the authors said, the playwrights would have no right to complain about the government, and so would be deprived of a source of anger and subject matter. But the article, "On the Road to the Première," contained one idea, plainly stated, that caused an uproar when it appeared: the personality cult, Karpinsky and Burlatsky said, had been criticized only lightly, and the censors were preventing anything deeper.

Brezhnev, who had already begun

the ideological rehabilitation of Stalin, was furious when his aides brought the piece to his attention. He took the article as a personal attack. By chance, the article had appeared on the same day that a member of the Central Committee criticized the military industry, which had been Brezhnev's province before he became general secretary. Karpinsky, Burlatsky, and the editor of *Komsomolskaya Pravda* were fired. Karpinsky was quickly appointed to a job at *Izvestia*, but after he made a few critical remarks at a meeting of that paper's Communist Party committee he was eased out of there, too.

Despite his inherited romantic view of Bolshevism and his own pleasure in the perquisites of power, Karpinsky could no longer hide his disaffection. The invasion of Czechoslovakia, in August of 1968, was for Karpinsky and many of his friends a breaking point. He did not join the seven young protesters who went to Red Square with banners and were arrested and sent to prison or a psychiatric hospital or into exile. Nor did he form any links with Andrei Sakharov or other leading intellectuals who had decided, once and for all, to give up their lives in the hierarchy for the dangers of political dissidence. But he did act. Under the pen name L. Okunev, Karpinsky wrote a long article called "Words Are Also Deeds," for circulation only among a select group of friends and would-be reformers within the world of the Party and its official academies. (The article was published abroad in 1982 in Stephen F. Cohen's book "An End to Silence.") The pseudonym was an inside joke: "Karpinsky" derives from "carp," and "Okunev" from "perch." In the article Karpinsky argued that free thought—and not "rows of armed soldiers, insurgent crowds, columns of revolutionary sailors, or a volley from the cruiser Aurora"—would one day challenge the Soviet system. Furthermore, the state structures and ideological machinery would not be able to resist, for the system "lacks any serious social basis. It cannot convince anyone of its fertility and hangs on only by the instinct of self-preservation," he wrote. "The farce of neo-Stalinism we are passing through is just the outward expression of the 'uneasy forebodings' the petty tyrants feel. They long for the old regime, the 'Stalin fortress,' but they find only

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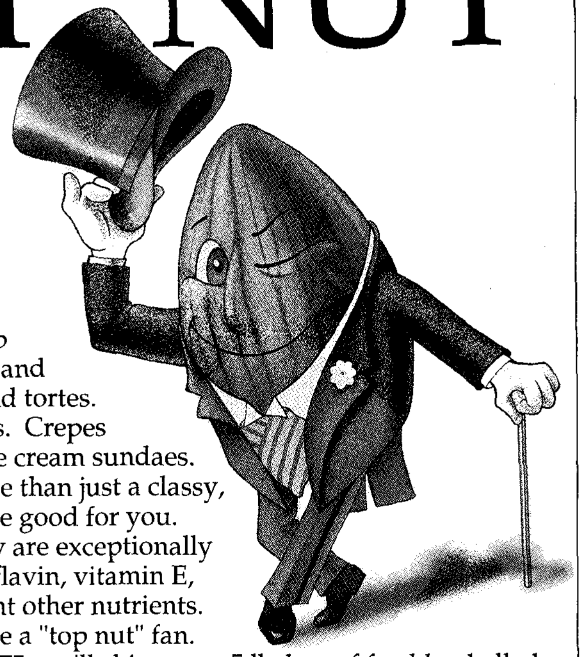

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decrepit foundations, too weak to support such a structure."

The article, like nearly all of Karpinsky's writings, is clogged with indirection and filler, great clots of the undigested verbiage of the typical Party apparatchik. It was, however, remarkable not only for its moments of clarity and daring but also for its prescience. Here was an apparatchik ("We are pinning our hopes on you," Suslov had said) who now believed no more in the viability of the Bolshevik state than did Berdyaev, Sakharov, Amalrik, or Solzhenitsyn.

"Our tanks in Prague were, if you will, an anachronism, an 'inadequate' weapon," Karpinsky wrote. "They 'fired' at—ideas. With no hope of hitting the target. They 'dealt with' the Czechoslovak situation the same way that at one time certain reptiles 'dealt with' the coming of the age of mammals. The reptiles bit at the air, gnashing their teeth in the same ether that was literally seething with the plankton of renewal. At the same time, fettered by their natural instincts, they searched for 'hidden stocks of weapons' and diligently occupied the postal and telegraph offices. With a fist to the jaw of thinking society, they thought they had knocked out and 'captured' its thinking processes."

Karpinsky also provided an insider's view, identifying within the monolith of the Party structure "a layer of Party intellectuals." He went on to say, "To be sure, this layer is thin and disconnected; it is constantly eroded by coöptation and promotion, and is thickly interlaced with careerists, flatterers, loudmouths, jesuits, cowards, and other products of the bureaucratic selection process. But this layer could move toward an alliance with the entire social body of the intelligentsia if favorable conditions arose. This layer is already an arm of the intelligentsia, its 'parliamentary faction' within the administrative structure. This faction will inevitably grow, constituting a hidden opposition, without specific shape and not aware of itself, but an actually existing and widely ramified opposition at all levels within the administrative chain."

And that is precisely what happened between 1985 and 1988. The dissidents were the bravest and most clear-minded of all, but in the early Gorbachev years they did not provide, in numbers or in force, an adequate army. As if from nowhere, intellectuals within the Party, the institutes, the press, and the literary, artistic, and scientific worlds slowly took a Soviet leader at his word that this would be a different age. For once, the purposes of a Kremlin leader and the liberal intelligentsia intersected.

The tragedy was that by the time Gorbachev came to power there were so many broken lives: great minds lost to emigration, drink, suicide, despair, or sheer cynicism. "So many people had been destroyed," Karpinsky said. "You can maintain that split way of thinking for a while, but then you begin to degenerate and start to speak only what is permitted, and the rest of the conscience and the soul decays. Many people did not survive to *perestroika*. We had to create an internal moral system, and not everyone could sustain that indefinitely. Solzhenitsyn spoke about this in his essay 'Live Not by Lies.' I understood his viewpoint, and we tried not to live by lies, but we couldn't always manage it. If you ignore the regulations of the state completely, and go into total dissidence, then you can't have a family: you don't know where you will get rent money, and your children would have to go into the streets to scrape up a living. To fulfill this principle of not living under a lie in every aspect is just impossible, because you live in a certain time.

"Compared with the people who were not afraid of prison, my friends and I were not heroes. We abstained from direct acts. This position was itself a compromise. But it was the sort of compromise you make when you are in a cage with a lion. It is understandable, though nothing to be proud of. When I myself was in the position of having to say what I felt, I said it. I just didn't deliberately try to put my head in a noose. I used Aesopian language. I had to use hints about progress—nothing more. What we did publish only hinted at our real thoughts."

One often wonders what it's all about.

But "Words Are Also Deeds" went far beyond Aesopian language. In 1970, Karpinsky gave a copy of his text to Roy Medvedev, the Marxist historian. A few months later, Medvedev called Karpinsky and told him that the K.G.B. had ransacked his apartment and taken every manuscript in sight, including "Words Are Also Deeds." For a few years, Karpinsky was oblivious of the trouble he was in. He bounced around from job to job, from a sociology institute to editing Marxist-Leninist works at Progress Publishers. But in 1975, when he was caught working on the manuscript of his friend Otto Latsis's book "On the Eve of a Great Breakthrough," an analysis of collectivization and Stalinism, the K.G.B. called him in. Naturally, the interrogator was an old friend: a Komsomol colleague named Filipp Bobkov, who had become one of the most infamous figures in the Soviet secret police. Karpinsky tried to soften up Bobkov. "When you came to me, there was tea and cookies," he told him. "You don't even offer me tea. It's not very polite." Bobkov was not amused. He passed the damning documents along to the Communist Party Control Committee, and Len Karpinsky, the son of Lenin's friend and the Party's great hope, was expelled. Suslov, for one, viewed Karpinsky's transgressions as a personal betrayal.

Now Karpinsky did whatever he could to make a living—among other things, commissioning paintings and monuments for a state agency, for which he received a minuscule salary. He kept up his friendships, talked politics, and for a while lived at the dacha he had inherited from his father. The moment of reckoning he had written about in "Words Are Also Deeds," the advent of dissent as a cultural and political fact of life, seemed years off.

EVEN after Gorbachev took power, in March of 1985, Karpinsky never dreamed that change could happen so quickly. And, at first, it did not. Although the liberals in the Politburo secured the editorship of *Moscow News* for Karpinsky's friend Yegor Yakovlev and told him to transform the tourist giveaway sheet into "a tribune of reform," *glasnost* was initially a process of hints, insinuations. To read now through a stack of *Moscow News* issues from 1987 and 1988 is to get lost in a blur of non-language. The barriers were immense at first, the victories almost unbearably difficult. When the editors of *Moscow News* wanted to print a simple obituary of the writer Viktor Nekrasov, the Politburo itself had to give permission, and did so only after long debate.

"But still the change was tremendous," Karpinsky said. "The difference between the thaw and *glasnost* was a difference in temperature. If the temperature under Khrushchev was two degrees above zero Celsius, then *glasnost* pushed it to twenty above. Huge chunks of ice just melted away, and now we were talking not only about Stalin's personality cult but also about Leninism, Marxism, the essence of the system. There had been nothing like that under Khrushchev. It had been just a narrow opening, through which only Stalin's cult could be seen. There had been no real changes. And, as we saw, it could all be reversed. The bureaucracy, the Party, the K.G.B.—all the repressive apparatus in charge of the intelligentsia and the press—were in place."

For Karpinsky, *Moscow News* provided the opening to a public hearing and also to a rehabilitation. In March of 1987, he published a long article entitled "It's Absurd to Hesitate Before an Open Door." Like his liberal pieces of the past, it was a mixed performance. He made sure to blast the West for what he thought was its phony concern for the Soviet dissidents, but he also made a crucial point that was then getting close consideration within the government: the critique of Stalin begun in 1956 would have to go deeper. Reform without a thorough assessment of the country's "core" problems, the rottenness of its history and foundations, would be meaningless.

Karpinsky wanted to rejoin the Party, not only as personal vindication but also in order to play a role in what was still the central institution of political power. At a meeting with the chairman of the Party's Control Committee, however, the hard-liner Mikhail Solomentsev mocked Karpinsky. From a thick stack of papers that had obviously been compiled by the Party and the K.G.B., Solomentsev pulled out a copy of "Words Are Also Deeds," and, holding it up, he shouted, "You still have not disarmed ideologically! Nothing has changed in our party!" But things had changed. The sharp ideological divisions within the Party had become an open secret, an open struggle, and the trick was to get the support of powerful liberals within the structure. Three old friends of Karpinsky's—Yuri Afanasyev, Nikolai Shmelyov, and Yuri Karyakin—brought to the Nineteenth Special Party Conference, in June of 1988, a petition demanding his rehabilitation. With the help of his old acquaintances Aleksandr Yakovlev and, amazingly, Boris Pugo, the gambit worked. By the next year, Karpinsky was in the regular rotation as a columnist at *Moscow News*—a golden boy, he says, "of a certain age."

IN the past few years, Moscow has been a newspaper fanatic's dream. Karpinsky's columns and *Moscow News* are only a part of the morning haul. Having started from nothing, from the jargon of the Communist Party press, Moscow has become the most exciting newspaper city since New York after the Second World War. The thaw was a liberalization dominated by a few works of real literature, but *glasnost* has been a period of journalism—of investigation, history, sensation, commentary, and scoop. At first, the most obvious mainstays of *glasnost* were *Moscow News* and the weekly magazine *Ogonyok*. But, as *glasnost* evolved into more genuine freedom for the press, the democratic vista widened. Today, there are the breathless papers that rush to the aid of the Yeltsin cause: the semi-official daily, *Rossiiskaya Gazeta*, and, with a circulation of twenty million, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. *Literaturnaya Gazeta* prints a blend of high-minded cultural criticism, political analysis, and Yuri Shchekochikhin's

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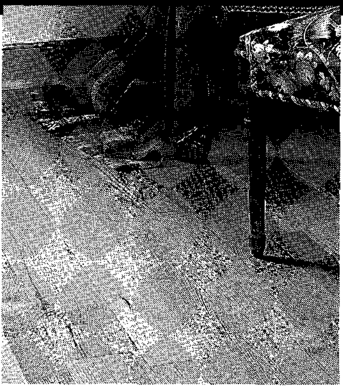

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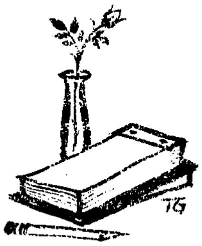
investigative work on the K.G.B. *Argumenty i Fakty*, with a circulation of more than twenty-five million, is a kind of weekly bulletin board of two-hundred-word articles and factoids. When it ran a poll a couple of years ago revealing Andrei Sakharov's enormous popularity and Gorbachev's slump, Gorbachev had a public fit and threatened to fire the editor. (Instead, he fired the hawkish editor of *Pravda*, Viktor Afanasyev.)

The former government organ *Izvestia* held a putsch of its own in August, tossing out its apparatchik editor, Nikolai Yefimov, and replacing him with a team that has made *Izvestia* the daily paper of record: stolid, wealthy, rich with foreign news, humorless. *Izvestia's* series on Moscow's destruction of Korean Airlines Flight 007 was at least as good as anything on that subject published in the West. For tabloid sensation, there are *Top Secret's* true-crime stories ("Murder on Kutuzovsky Street!") and *Megapolis-Express's* local muckraking. The puckish *Kommersant*, edited by Yegor Yakovlev's son Vladimir, covers the emerging business world, letting young entrepreneurs know which clan rules which district and how to find cheap computers on the black market. In train stations and on street corners, hawkers do a brisk business in Baltic sex papers, mimeographed neo-Bolshevik sheets, and pirated copies of a booklet called "How to Find a Job in America and Europe." For nostalgia's sake, it's still worth reading *Pravda* as it tries desperately to prove, out of the side of its mouth, that it never really meant what it had been saying for almost a century. Lately, *Pravda* has become the mouthpiece of a neo-Bolshevik movement, but, like Bolshevism, it may soon go out of business. And for the hard-liners there is *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, which published the key manifestos leading up to the coup, and *Dyen* ("The Newspaper of the Spiritual Opposition"), edited by Aleksandr Prokhanov, a theocratic militarist known affectionately as the Nightingale of the General Staff. Among the wire services, the old Big Brother of the ticker, TASS, which is now known as ITAR-TASS, has been neutered and taken over by the Russian government, while Interfax and a few agencies in the other republics have the manic intensity of the Associated Press on a good day. Interfax's leading reporter, Vyacheslav Terekhov, is a bulldog in a brown suit, pestering politicians and filing dispatches from breakfast until midnight. He scooped the world by several hours last August when he reported that Gorbachev would dissolve the Communist Party.



Until 1988, or 1989 at the latest, *Moscow News* remained the country's singular iconoclast, always smashing idols just before the reformers in the leadership did. In any given week, a foreign reporter in the Soviet Union could sit down with a copy of *Moscow News* and simply rewrite two or three of its revelations to make news at home. The hard-liner Yegor Ligachev called *Moscow News* an "ersatz" paper, but Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, and Aleksandr Yakovlev obviously felt otherwise. *Moscow News* was clearly the voice of the liberals in the Politburo. But the lack of real independence at *Moscow News*, its link to Gorbachev himself, began to work against it in 1990 and 1991. As the country became more diverse, as the liberal intelligentsia's ideas about the future of society and politics grew far more radical than Gorbachev's own, *Moscow News*, under Yegor Yakovlev, began to look a bit timid and almost comically protective of its original patron.

"Without realizing it, Yegor was turning *Moscow News* into *Pravda*," I was told by *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* editor, Vitaly Tretyakov, who was Yakovlev's deputy at the time. "Just as *Pravda* was the tribune of the old powers, he wanted *Moscow News* to be the tribune of the new power, the left-of-center position, the Gorbachev position in the Politburo. When I became Yegor's deputy, I began to see how many visitors and calls there were from the Central Committee, and it was obvious that the paper was not operating independently. Len Karpinsky was much more radical than Yegor, but *Moscow News* could be only as radical as Yegor would allow it to be. Yegor has the personality of a dictator, and that may be necessary, but he always wanted to be in possession of ultimate truth—he claimed to know all the answers. None of us at *Moscow News* could take a step without Yegor's say-so. You couldn't mention Lenin, for instance, because

Yegor thought he knew all there was to know about him. And then there was Gorbachev: we could not criticize him directly. And what could someone like Len do? After all, it was Yegor who pulled Len out of obscurity and got him a job."

By the summer of 1990, millions of people were quitting the Communist Party. The party that called itself "the initiator of *perestroika*"—an appalling bit of self-congratulation, considering the blood on its hands—had lost the power to convince many of its own members that it supported radical change. At *Moscow News*, Tretyakov proposed that the members of the paper's Party committee all resign as one. But Yakovlev said no, they should "stay the course." As usual, Yakovlev had the votes, Karpinsky's included.

Tretyakov was feeling more alienated by the day from his colleagues at the paper. He was not a man of the Gorbachev generation, and he did not have the Old Bolshevik background and Party connections of so many of the *shestidesyatniki*. His parents were laborers. Tretyakov had worked for years on some of the glossy propaganda magazines that the government printing organs ground out like sausage meat: *Soviet Life*, *Études Soviétiques*, *Soviet Woman*, and the rest. His time at *Moscow News* was "a gift," but, he decided, the time had come to leave. "My idea was to start something new, a better *Moscow News*," Tretyakov said.

AFTER spending a couple of weeks recently at *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* offices and sitting in on editorial meetings, I realized that Tretyakov had had very little idea of what he wanted when he held his first planning sessions, in the summer of 1990. He knew only that he did not want to tie the editorial direction and the tone of the paper to the fate of Mikhail Gorbachev or any other political personality. At first, he tried to induce some of the best-known writers in Moscow to join him. They all turned him down. No one with a family and an established position was prepared to risk them on an experiment, a notion. Tretyakov's one essential break came with the election of liberal democrats to Moscow City Hall. The new mayor, Gavriil Popov, and his deputy, Sergei Stankevich, were interested in Tretyakov's idea, and gave him a start-up loan of three hundred thousand rubles. No strings attached, Popov said. Remarkably, the city officials kept their word. They have never considered the paper their own, and have never interfered in editorial or business policy. "It was just a small investment in the transition to a free press," Stankevich said.

I had heard about the paper long before its first issue appeared. One summer afternoon two years ago, I drove to the country town of Peredelkino to visit Andrei Karaulov, a young theatre critic, and his wife, Natasha, who is the daughter of the playwright Mikhail Shatrov. Karaulov was a journalist-hustler the like of which I have never seen—at least, not in Moscow. Even in the early days of *perestroika*, he managed to get interviews with one Politburo member and spymaster after another. He somehow made patently evil and slimy men feel comfortable, then tortured them with a combination of unctuous charm and barbed questions. He even managed to get me in to see Gaidar Aliyev, a member of the Brezhnev circle, who has been described by the Moscow jurist and writer Arkady Vaksberg as "the living definition of the Mafia man." Karaulov's knack was so uncanny that some of his rivals moaned that he must have "dark connections." Another guest at the Peredelkino dacha that afternoon was a man in his early forties named Igor Zakharov. Zakharov turned out to be just about the most cynical man I have ever known, and he seemed to scorn himself most of all. He had worked for years at the Novosti Press agency, editing propaganda magazines with Tretyakov. "I am a born functionary," he said. "I never believed in anything official—not in Communism and not in the possibility of *perestroika*. I may have published all that shit, but I never believed it. You know that expression 'Life is elsewhere'?" But this willingness to work with odious bureaucrats while holding opposing beliefs seemed to arouse less sympathy for him than it did for Karpinsky. It was somehow touching that Karpinsky actually did believe in something when he was young and then believed in something else later on. Zakharov believed in nothing but the hopelessness of almost everything, and the sudden advent of radical changes in the country made his cynicism seem worthless. So when he and Karaulov began telling me about their work with Vitaly

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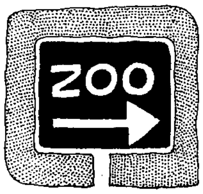
Tretyakov on a new newspaper, to be called *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, not only did I think it would fail—I also hoped that it would.

I forgot about that discussion and *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* until six months later, when, in December of 1990, I was on a plane from Riga to Moscow. Eduard Shevardnadze had just resigned, and the Balts suspected that they were about to become the targets of the crackdown that Shevardnadze had been warning about; they were proved tragically correct the following month. On the plane, I borrowed two issues of an unfamiliar broadsheet—the first and second issues of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*—and I was startled. The front page of the first issue featured little mug shots of the country's political leaders, and above the pictures was the headline "They Rule Us: But What Do We Know About Them, the Most Powerful People in Our Country? Almost Nothing." On page 5 ("Ideas and People") the historian Yuri Afanasyev published what was surely the year's most incisive piece of political commentary: "We Are Moving to the Side of Dictatorship." In details that proved absolutely accurate, Afanasyev described Gorbachev's "tragedy"—how his own internal and political limitations left him open to the pressures of the hard-line Communists in the regime. It was just the sort of political critique of Gorbachev that *Moscow News* could not bring itself to publish. Then, on page 8 of the first issue—the back page—was a manifesto by Tretyakov declaring that there had never been "in the history of the Soviet Union" a paper independent of political interests. He would publish one. The second issue led with the headline "Eduard Shevardnadze Leaves. The Military-Industrial Complex Stays. What Choice Will Gorbachev Make?" A few pages later, Karaulov weighed in with a fascinating interview with the No. 2 man at that time in the K.G.B., Filipp Bobkov—the man who had interrogated Len Karpinsky fifteen years earlier.



One day during those first weeks of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* life, I went to the paper's offices with Karaulov. As we walked along the muddy streets near the K.G.B. buildings, he was trying to sell me—literally—some crackpot spy-story documents involving the Bolshoi Theatre. Information is constantly for sale now in Moscow. The Russian prosecutor assigned to investigate the August coup charges at least five hundred dollars for interviews about his work. "Interviews are creative works," he says. When I refused Karaulov's "tip" on the Bolshoi and explained Western rules about not paying for information, he seemed alternately bemused and hurt. "Besides, you'd never find the place without me," he said. "You owe me for that, at least." He had a point. *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* offices are tucked away in an obscure courtyard building not far from Lubyanka Square. At the time, the paper shared the building with the Voskhod (Sunrise) printing company. Expansion eventually eased the printers out. The paper originally had twenty people on its staff and appeared three days a week; now it has two hundred and appears five days a week. When I first visited the office, the place was a sea of paper and ironic memorabilia—faded portraits of old Politburo members a specialty. No one looked as if he had slept, showered, or shaved in days.

Rejected by the older newspaper stars, Tretyakov got his journalists wherever he could find them. Most of them had worked at second- or third-tier publications—at movie and theatrical quarterlies, Baltic underground sheets, Komsomol dailies. Some had no journalistic experience at all. They were biologists, secretaries, manual workers, students, diplomats—anything. Whatever skills they did or did not have, they had a unanimous contempt for all things *sovok*—a slang term for "Soviet." (The staff's favorite early fan letter read "Congratulations: You are neither pro-Soviet nor anti-Soviet. You are simply non-Soviet.") All were young, and they did not bother to struggle with the questions of their elders. The ideological ruminations of a man like Len Karpinsky were for these people irrelevant and just a little bit sad.

Mikhail Leontiev, the paper's economics editor, who was thirty-three years old, was a typical new employee. He had studied economics at the Plekhanov Institute, in Moscow, but to avoid doing "idiot work for the regime" he quit the academic world and worked for years restoring old furniture. He hardly ever wrote then, he told me. "Why bother?" He did write one prescient essay for a Latvian paper in 1989; called "The New Consensus," it dealt with the growing front of Fascists, nationalists, and military leaders. "That was about all I could do," Leontiev later told me between meetings at *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. "I just couldn't work for any of the old papers. Coming here, discovering *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, was a revelation—the revelation we were all waiting for. The coverage of economics in our paper starts from the principle that we don't need to tear our hair out about whether Marxism-Leninism or capitalism is the right way to go. That debate is as dead as can be. Do we really have to go crazy over whether it is good to find a healthy balance between efficiency and social welfare? About whether the rules of the market are ultimately correct? I don't think so. I don't cover Communism or any other religion in these pages. That's not my business."

The darkening political mood in the winter of 1990-91, the ominous sense that the Army, the K.G.B., and the Communist Party were now forming an open alliance against a radical reform of the country, gave the paper a clear sense of purpose. To Muscovites reading *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* in its first month of publication the new paper conveyed an understanding of and a foreboding about the political earthquake to come. Not so *Moscow News*, which still kept its reports within certain bounds. *Moscow News* was now responding not to censors—they had been either removed or rendered completely benign—but, rather, to an internal sense of propriety and caution, a lingering reverence for Gorbachev and the old hopes of the thaw generation.

All this changed on the streets of Vilnius. The bloody, and failed, coup attempt in Lithuania in January of 1991 changed everything for nearly all the middle-aged and older intellectuals who had remained loyal to the idea of a reformed Communist Party. While *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* staff was reporting the story of the Lithuanian coup attempt as if it were the logical extension of the events of the months before, *Moscow News* suddenly went through an ideological conversion. It lost all faith in Gorbachev. Karpinsky, Yegor Yakovlev, and a long list of *shestidesyatniki* signed a front-page editorial expressing outrage at the assault and declaring that the regime was

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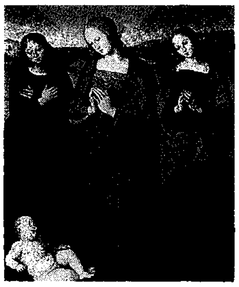

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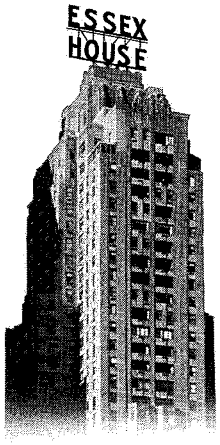

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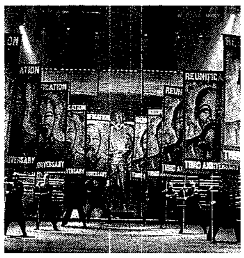
A scene from the Cameron Mackintosh production of "Miss Saigon"

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If you're booked for a Saturday or Sunday matinee, double your enjoyment by starting your afternoon at the theatre with another time-honored New York tradition — the weekend brunch. These sumptuous midday repasts are offered by many hotels and restaurants in the Broadway theatre district, and by trendy SoHo and Greenwich Village eateries near Off-Broadway theatres.

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New York nights ring with the sound of music, especially on weekends, when no one's watching the clock. Start with cocktails at a stylish piano bar, pay homage to Cole Porter at a classic cabaret, and spend the wee hours listening to your favorite jazz stars swinging at a late-night club in the heart of Greenwich Village.

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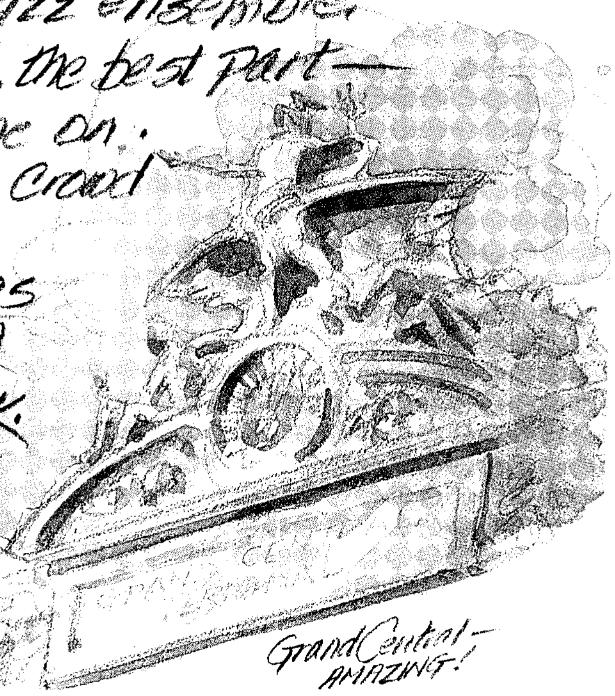
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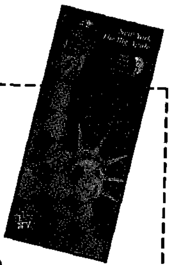

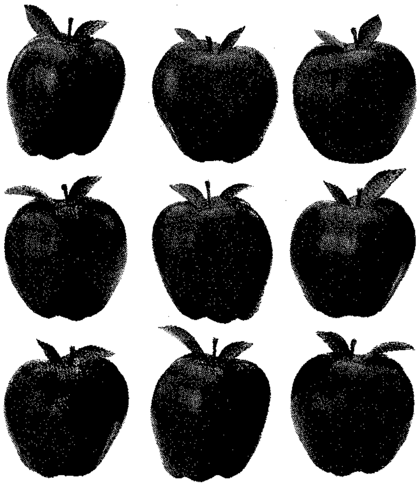

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Dance

From late April through June, New York's two premier ballet companies, the New York City Ballet (the creation of dance maestro George Balanchine) and the American Ballet Theatre, appear at their respective homes in Lincoln Center — the New York State Theatre and the Metropolitan Opera House.

Highlights of the upcoming New York City Ballet season include Peter Martins' new production of "The Sleeping Beauty" and new ballets by eleven distinguished choreographers. The American Ballet Theatre's spring schedule features the world premiere of a new ballet by Agnes de Mille and a revival of "Le Sacre du Printemps," set to Igor Stravinsky's exciting musical score.

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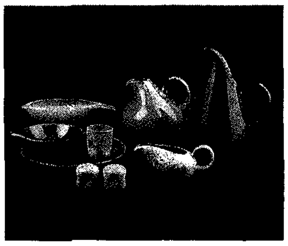
Museums

The more than one hundred and fifty New York museums appeal to every artistic fancy, whether your taste runs to Rembrandt or Rauschenberg, Middle Kingdom or Modigliani.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's collections cover five thousand years of artistic and cultural history, from ancient civilizations to modern-day America. Seeing it all is a challenge to even the most avid museumgoer, but if you come on Friday or Saturday, the museum stays open until 8:45 P.M., giving you extra time to explore.

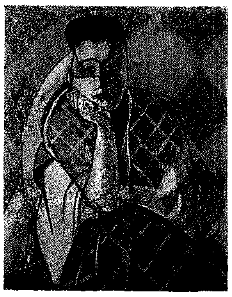

Russel Wright's "American Modern" dinnerware, at the Brooklyn Museum

If you or your youngsters are curious about the mysterious workings of hurricanes and lightning bolts, don't miss the Hayden Planetarium's new sky show, "Amazing Worlds of Weather." Extra showings are scheduled on weekends.

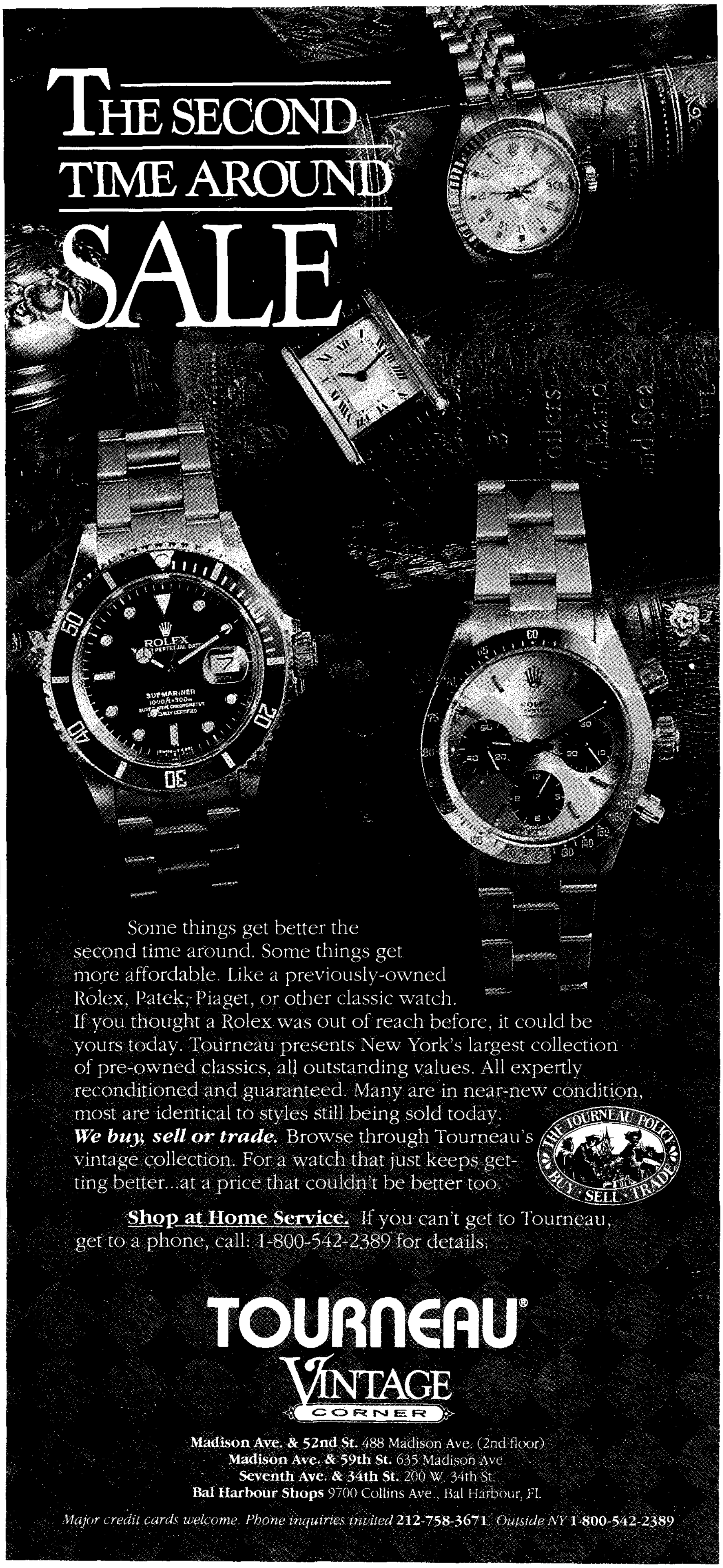
Though best known as the repository of such treasures as Picasso's "Les Demoiselles d'Avignon" and Andy Warhol's "Gold Marilyn Monroe," the Museum of Modern Art also boasts a fabulous film library of nearly ten thousand classic movies. If you're bringing the kids, take in one of the special family film programs held on selected Saturdays.

Film buffs can also explore the vintage moviemaking equipment and film memorabilia at the American Museum of the Moving Image, located in Queens on the site of the old Astoria Studios, once the East Coast center of moviemaking. Fans of the small screen can view their favorite "I Love Lucy" episodes, and much more, at Manhattan's Museum of Television and Radio.

The Guggenheim Museum, the only public building in New York designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, has been closed for two years for a major expansion. But in May it will reopen with a new ten-story wing that will add more than thirty thousand square feet of additional space — the better to display its superb collection of modern masters.


Matisse's "Woman with a Veil" is on display at MoMA

Take a breather, then head over to the Museum of the



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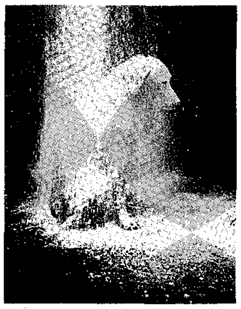
City of New York to see its marvelous old drawings, prints, and other Big Apple historic memorabilia. Other stops might include the Whitney Museum's superb collection of twentieth-century American art; the Frick Collection, which features masterpieces of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art and holds Sunday concerts once or twice a month; and the South Street Seaport, a living museum of New York's maritime history.



A William Wegman color polaroid from the Whitney's retrospective

Try to also make time to visit the newly expanded Pierpont Morgan Library, with its fabulous collection of illuminated manuscripts, and the Brooklyn Museum, with a magnificent collection of art and artifacts. And then there are two museums that pay tribute to the American immigrant experience — the Ellis Island Museum of Immigration, a stone's throw from the Statue of Liberty, and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, whose Sunday walking tours movingly re-create the lives of New York's immigrant groups.

Shopping

"If you can't find it here, it doesn't exist," New Yorkers proudly proclaim, and indeed, the city's spellbinding array of shopping establishments and the range of merchandise available in all price categories heartily support that claim.

New York's legendary department stores are clustered mostly in midtown and along Fifth Avenue, and are brimming with everything from designer fashions and children's toys to Oriental carpets and gourmet foods. Most have Sunday hours, usually from noon to five P.M.

Diners linger over brunch at a SoHo café

If you're in the market for elegant gift items, luxurious linens, fine china, and art and antiques, head for the posh Upper East Side's boutiques and galleries, especially those along Third, Lexington, and Madison Avenues from about Fifty-ninth to Seventy-ninth Streets.

Weekends are a great time for the trendy set to shop for funky clothes and nostalgia items in Greenwich Village, SoHo, and the Upper West Side, and for bargain-hunters to dig for treasures in Manhattan's flea markets and antiques fairs, as well as the discount fashion emporia of the Lower East Side (open Sundays, but not Saturdays).

Helen Brower is a native New Yorker who often writes about the city's leisure pursuits and cultural attractions.

"criminal" and was well into its "death throes." For so long, most of these men and women had thought in terms of a socialism made somehow humane, of a steady pace of reform. Yakovlev, especially, had never liked Boris Yeltsin—never liked the way he attacked Gorbachev or conducted himself. Now this generation had nowhere to go but to Yeltsin and to the people Gorbachev had venomously referred to as "the so-called democrats."

The staff at *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* viewed the conversion of *Moscow News* as pathetic. "The truth is, I could never understand why those people decided to make their split only when the tanks rolled into Vilnius," Igor Zakharov said later. "It's like trying to figure out why a woman who hates her husband for twenty years finally decides one day, after one little incident, to get up, walk out, and never come back."

The dreams and the delusions of the editors at *Moscow News* died slowly. In March, Yakovlev invited Karpinsky and a few other friends to his apartment for a sixtieth-birthday party. "It was a meeting of people who didn't know what to say to one another," Yakovlev's son Vladimir said. "The energy they used to have was gone, and the world around them was no longer their world. And, most important, they didn't know how to relate to this new world. It was the feeling you get at the gatherings in Russia forty days after someone dies. No one is crying anymore, but no one knows quite what to say. These birthday gatherings had always been such celebrations. Now it was just all silence, a complete breakdown."

WEEK after week, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* was reinventing the newspaper in Moscow, and a twenty-seven-year-old reporter named Sergei Parkhomenko was consistently the paper's most incisive political commentator. The son and grandson of journalists, Parkhomenko first won a name for himself at the monthly *Teatr* when he covered the first session of the Congress of People's Deputies, in May of 1989—a job he called "the ultimate in theatre criticism." He told me, "Imagine if you in America had held the Constitutional Convention live on television. The old order died a little every day. No play ever changed an audience more thoroughly."

One night, I went with Parkhomenko to the printing presses at *Izvestia*, where *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* is published. He was the night-duty editor, acting as a liaison between the printers and the editors back at the *Gazeta* office, who are constantly trying to shove late items into the paper. He had already written a column in the morning and had called in a few items for his after-hours job as a stringer. Like many good young reporters in Moscow, Parkhomenko had discovered that he could make some hard currency on the side by working for a foreign news organization—in his case, Agence France-Presse, the official French wire service. As it turned out, the experience expanded his feeling for journalism. "With the French, I got a taste of real reporting," he said. "It was a new sort of game. Who can be the first to get the information? Who can get sources? Before, it was all 'I think this, I think that.' Now the game had changed, and I loved it, and the skills were just what I needed. You see, I somehow always knew I would work at a place like *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. I knew it instinctively. I wanted a place that was born without any complexes. There are more radical publications, but I'm not interested in the contest for who can be the most radical or liberal. I can't stand unity and consensus."

Parkhomenko is best known in Moscow for his commentaries—mainly because he refuses to shill for any one politician or party line—but he is also an instinctive investigative reporter. Last year, he caused a terrific scandal when he discovered that the Central Committee had for years been running a huge, fourteen-room workshop for manufacturing fake Western passports. He reported that there were fake stamps, blank passports for dozens of foreign countries, and even false mustaches and beards for the passport photographs.

Investigative work has been a signature of the front page of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. A married couple in their twenties at the paper, Anna Ostapchuk and Yevgeny Krasnikov, enraged the Party last summer when they scooped everyone by printing a copy of the Communist Party's proposed new platform, endorsing a "democratic, humane socialism." Ostapchuk's methods were "quite simple and un-Soviet," she told me. She had gone to the apartment of a Central Committee member, Vasily Lipitsky, and began

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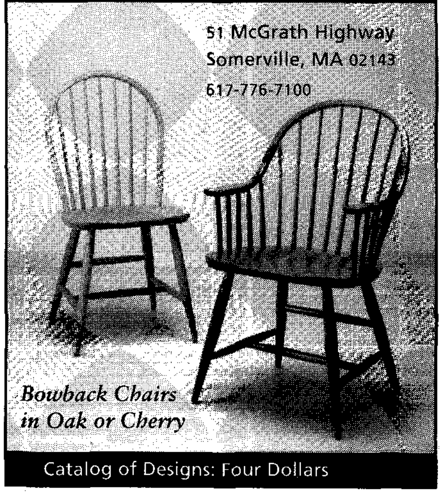

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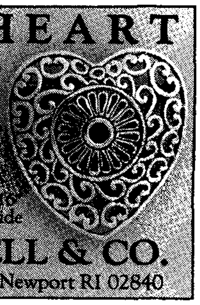

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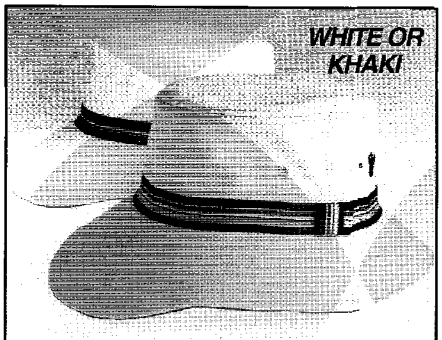

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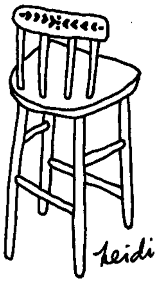
asking about the platform. He gave her the document, which was twenty-three pages long and had been written by Gorbachev's aide Georgi Shakhnazarov, and said she could read it, "but no notes and no tape recorders."

"Then something odd happened," Ostapchuk said. "Lipitsky said he had to take a phone call in the next room. As soon as he left, I got out my tape recorder and read the thing as fast as I could. He didn't come back in time. I finished. But I'm sure he wanted me to do just that. It was terrific fun."

Presented with the scoop, Tretyakov was stunned. At *Moscow News*, his bosses would never have permitted such a thing—too dangerous, a distinct lack of respect. But Tretyakov immediately published the piece. In a wry note to the readers, he wrote that ordinarily *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* did not print party manifestos and platforms, "because that would be a form of advertising," and added, "But from such a party we would rather not take any money."

The next day, as every newspaper in Moscow scurried to catch up with the story in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, Parkhomenko got a swift lesson in the sensibilities of the powerful. At a small, late-night press conference in the Moscow suburb of Novo-Ogarevo, Gorbachev looked at the reporters and said, "O.K., so who here is from *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*?"

The reporter from state television, a whinnying timeserver, blanched and panicked. "No, no, it's him," he said, pointing at Parkhomenko.



"Where did you steal it from?" Gorbachev said.

"I can't say," Parkhomenko said.

"And why not?"

"Because that's the way we work."

After the press conference, two of Gorbachev's aides tried to weasel the information out of Parkhomenko.

"Oh, come on," one of them said. "You can tell me. I won't tell another soul!"

Shakhnazarov, for his part, told me that he was shocked to see his work in the paper. "Woodward and Bernstein—that is not exactly something we're used to," he said.

Sometimes Tretyakov and Zakharov, the village elders at the paper, are scared by their own reporters—by the reporters' relentlessness and giddy fearlessness. They are well aware of how inexperienced the reporters are, how little they know about degrees of reliability and balance. Often, reporters will turn in stories that are little more than rumors that seem too good to check. But, while the top editors often demand more reporting and numerous rewrites, they have seldom killed stories. According to everyone at the paper, the only story that Tretyakov refused to run without further questioning was the stuff about the K.G.B. and the Bolshoi Theatre that Karaulov had been trying to peddle to me.

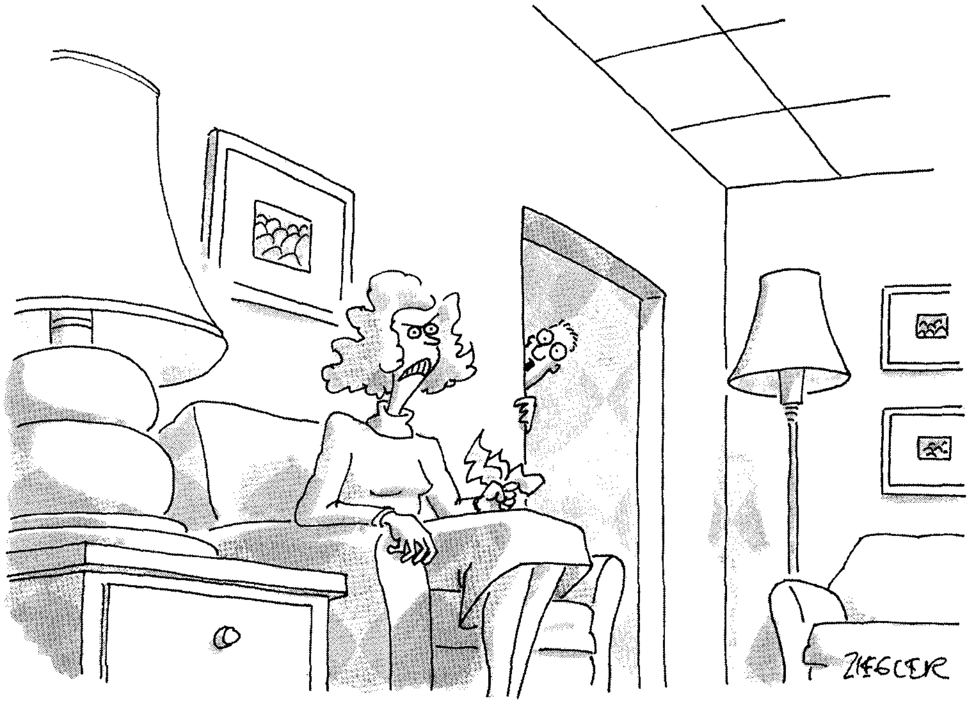
"The reason these kids do things like investigative work is that they not only don't fear the system—they don't even respect it," Zakharov said. "These kids are arrogant, silly, uneducated, and undisciplined, and they live only in the present. They don't care about yesterday and have no idea that there is nothing new under the sun. But they have no prejudices. They don't think ahead and wonder if someone at the Kremlin will think this or that about what they do. They just go ahead and do it."

The young reporters have also changed the language of newspapers. They have dispensed with the wooden bureaucratese and fanatic sloganeering of the Soviet period. "We don't talk *Pravda* language," Parkhomenko said at the printshop.

Before I moved to Russia, I took a course at George Washington University in something my classmates and I called "newspaper Russian." For weeks, we memorized endless lists of political clichés: "The talks were held in a warm and friendly atmosphere"; "The peace-loving comrade-nations of the world will face the imperialists in a round of negotiations next week"; and so on. It was the language of *Novoyaz*, or Newspeak, and nowhere had it reached such a level of absurdity as in the Soviet Union. But *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* younger reporters had never had to write that way—or, at least, not for long. While someone like Len Karpinsky still has trouble removing the *Novoyaz* sludge from his prose—"I try, but I can't always get it clear"—the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* writers work under no such handicap.

"Right away, we tried to imitate

Western language," Parkhomenko said. "In Russian, there had never been the political language of a civilized country. So we adopted phrases like 'the Yeltsin administration'—how could you talk about 'the Brezhnev administration,' or even 'the Gorbachev administration'? At a certain point, we had to use Western terms for what had become, essentially, Western politics. All the old phrases of *Pravda* went out the window. The same was true of economics—we had to accommodate 'investment,' 'entrepreneurship,' and all the rest. Where we don't imitate the Americans is in the question of point of view. We make no bones about the fact that the reporter is making some evaluation of what has happened. For us, the guarantee of fairness or objectivity is not that the reporter has no opinion but, rather, that the paper as a whole will hold a wide range of opinions."



"I forgot our anniversary and you don't feel good about it, and, hey, that's O.K."

• •

Tretyakov likes nothing better than to keep all political sides slightly angry with him. Yeltsin's former press secretary, Pavel Voshchanov, wrote letters of complaint, expressing incredulity at how an independent newspaper could be so critical of a democratic leader. When Gorbachev's popularity was at its lowest, last spring, Tretyakov wrote a piece called "Apologia for Gorbachev," which did not dispute the attacks on Gorbachev but did remind readers of the Soviet President's accomplishments since he came to power. In the West, the piece might have seemed self-evident, even a last roar of Gorbymania. But in Moscow, where Gorbachev was alone in a political "center" that existed nowhere except in his mind, Tretyakov's piece, with its insistence on Gorbachev's extraordinary achievements of ending the Cold War and the arms race, and creating democratic parliaments and a free press, was a contrarian bombshell. The Yeltsin forces wondered just what this new paper was up to. "And that is just the way I like it," Tretyakov said.

BUT, of course, it was the August coup and *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* coverage of the ensuing collapse of the Soviet Union that insured the paper's reputation. Even now, months later, there is at the paper a distinct nostalgia for the August events—a longing for the excitement and camaraderie. Small wonder. Vladimir Todres, a twenty-five-year-old political reporter, said that he and his friends at the paper saw the coup as the defining event of their generation—the street-level, media-age equivalent of what the Twentieth Party Congress was for Karpinsky, Gorbachev, and the thaw generation.

"For us, the putsch was not simply a matter of politics," Todres said. "Usually, we hate politics, to tell you the truth. But this was the Pepsi Generation under threat. Our very existence was in jeopardy. The bikers feared for their motorcycles. The young businessmen worried about their markets. The racketeers even thought about their bottom line and came to defend Yeltsin's White House. Prostitutes, students, scholars—everybody—had an interest in this new life, and we were just not willing to give it all up to these old men. And, also, it was like being in a great movie. Life and art were all mixed up together. My friends who were abroad were heartbroken, not because they felt fear but because they felt left out. They couldn't have a part in the movie."

The journalism part of the movie was splendid. On the first day of the coup, Tretyakov decided not to defy the coup plotters' press ban. His thinking was that a quick wrong move could endanger the staff and end the paper entirely. Some of the younger reporters were furious, especially after they heard that the printers at *Izvestia* were willing to defy the ban and work the presses. But Tretyakov insisted. The next day, as it became clearer that the coup leaders had neither the will nor the level of organization to mount a full-scale attack on the press as a whole, Tretyakov and the staff put out a Xeroxed version of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta.* This "underground" paper carried the lead headline "The Feeble Coup: It Is Still Not Over" and was filled with news about the putsch from Moscow and the provinces. At *Moscow News*, Karpinsky and editors of some of the other liberal papers published a makeshift *Obshchaya Gazeta*, or *Common Newspaper.*

In the meantime, the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* reporters were working on the story—especially Parkhomenko and Pavel Felgenhauer, the paper's defense analyst. Felgenhauer stayed in the White House throughout the three-day siege and was in constant contact with the military leaders planning Yeltsin's strategy of resistance in their makeshift "war room." Felgenhauer, a bearlike man who speaks English about as well as the average American college professor, never set out to be

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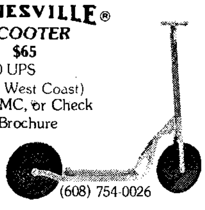

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a journalist or a military expert. He has a Ph.D. in biology and won what he called "a measure of international fame" with his thesis, "RNA Synthesis During the Maturation of Frog Oocytes." He told me, "I quit science because you can't do science anymore in this country. We can't even afford test tubes, or food for the frogs. So I became a journalist. I always liked to write."

Felgenhauer had followed military affairs the way some American kids follow baseball. It was all a game, a combination of action and statistics. "Pavel is a kid who likes toy soldiers," Parkhomenko said. "He's a gigantic forty-year-old kid who is a genius. He loved the coup, because he got to play soldier and war correspondent all at once."

Parkhomenko could not believe the look of supreme contentment in his colleague's eyes as they sat in the White House. "As for me, I was terrified," he said. "I thought I was a dead man—the romance of the White House is long gone. Now they try to say that it was all nothing, that there was never any danger. But that's ridiculous. It was all a war of nerves, a dangerous telephone war. There were orders and counter-orders by phone. When the Russian government found out that a contingent of tanks was being sent, its people set up rows of gas cannisters so that there would be a huge explosion. Their strategy all along was to maximize the threat of bloodshed, to scare the shit out of the K.G.B. and the putschists by essentially using unarmed people as a shield. It was not an especially humane strategy, but it worked. The coup guys wanted a surgical operation, and the Russians made that impossible. Thank God, we lived."

AFTER the coup, the paper no longer seemed very new. What took decades at the New York *Times* took less than a year at *Nezavisimaya Gazeta.* Russia has entered the post-Soviet age with Vitaly Tretyakov's brainchild as the country's premier newspaper. "We have to face it," Igor Zakharov said. "We're the establishment now." At *Moscow News,* Karpinsky became editor-in-chief late last August, after Gorbachev and Yeltsin put Yegor Yakovlev in charge of the state television bureaucracy.

The *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* reporters have discovered that respectability has its advantages. Felgenhauer now says that he gets secret military documents "by the boxful," simply through the connections he developed while he sat with the Russian generals during the coup. A few months ago, two officers from military intelligence provided him with an exposé of incompetence in the agency. The only details Felgenhauer left out were "about a particularly juicy sex scandal—we have standards, unfortunately."

Nezavisimaya Gazeta is getting better known all the time. At the moment, "no one exactly owns the paper," Tretyakov said, but he is in the process of setting up a joint-stock operation, with all the employees investing and holding shares. The paper just made a million rubles from an advertising supplement and is buying I.B.M.-knockoff computers for a newsroom that will no longer resemble the set of "The Front Page." *Nezavisimaya Gazeta's* reputation has grown so quickly abroad that many émigrés prefer it to New York's *Novoye Russkoye Slovo* (*New Russian Word*) or the Paris *Russkaya Mysl* (*Russian Thought*). You can find the paper in Paris and at a few émigré bookstores in New York. Like *Moscow News, Nezavisimaya Gazeta* is now published in Russian in Israel, in English in the United States and Britain, and in French in France and other European countries. To get hold of more foreign currency, Tretyakov has started a wire service, called NeGa, so that news bureaus in Moscow can keep up with developments in the Russian provinces and former republics. He is also planning a tabloid ("for the lower-brow reader"), and is thinking about getting into radio and television.

But, while Tretyakov is nearly dizzy with success, he realizes that the euphoria around the paper's office is long gone. The stretch last year when reporters worked for nothing and with no sleep is a memory. Zakharov is fed up with Tretyakov's insistence on doing everything himself, and is thinking about quitting. The foreign editor hasn't been getting along with Tretyakov lately, and he may go, too. Some of the youngest reporters, especially, worry that Tretyakov is becoming as autocratic as his old bosses at *Moscow News* were.

"In one year, the atmosphere around here has changed completely," I was told by Yuri Leonov, who is twenty-three and writes about foreign affairs. "In the beginning, we sat together and divided up all the questions and decided things together. Now there is a ruling class. I feel like a rank worker all of a sudden—a peon. No one asks my opinion about anything. When we started out, Vitaly said, 'Don't you think we need a union?' We all laughed, and said, 'What for? Do you think we need a Communist organization?' Well, now we have discovered that there is nothing to protect us."

Tretyakov has listened to these complaints many times. After Tatyana Malkina talked with him for four hours one afternoon, recommending a return to the old, informal ways at the paper, Tretyakov showed up for work wearing a sweater and jeans, and constantly asked for suggestions at the morning editorial meetings. But within a couple of days he was back in his jacket and tie.

"Common sense tells me that two hundred people can't all be friends," he said to me. "Those days are over. We can't continue to work in chaos. We can't have people drinking in the office or Misha Leontiev coming late to every editorial meeting. I have to keep reminding people that this was my idea—I started this paper. If we run this place like a party, we can come up with a few euphoric issues and can all congratulate one another. But that is no way to run a newspaper month after month after month. We are a business now. That's the brave new world. It's time we recognized it."

Just as Tretyakov finished on that stern note, there was a knock at his door. The entire staff had assembled, bearing gifts: a huge bunch of carnations and an eight-pack of Swedish cheese slices. "Remember," said Tatyana Malkina, the head of the delegation. "We'll always love you." Vitaly Tretyakov blushed. It was his birthday. He had forgotten, but the staff had not. He was forty years old.

—DAVID REMNICK

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

No Man's Land

BARBARA KOPPLE'S documentary "American Dream," about a strike in a Minnesota meat-packing plant, is a lucid and unfussy piece of movie journalism that manages to be as complexly affecting as a great novel. It's a masterpiece of social art: you can't shake off the experience this picture gives you. The story that Kopple tells here is a terrifying one, and the plainness and straightforwardness of her narrative manner accumulate force as the movie goes along. At first, the flat reportorial precision of her style may not feel satisfying—it's not like the stirring, balladlike lyricism of "Harlan County, U.S.A.," her celebrated 1976 documentary about a coal miners' strike in Kentucky—but by the end it has become piercingly expressive. Events unfold with the unaccountable headlong awfulness of a developing nightmare, and we begin to understand that Kopple's apparently even tone has nothing to do with objectivity or resignation—that it is, rather, the exaggerated calm of deep shock. "American Dream" speaks to us in the careful, measured voice of utter disbelief, the voice of an eyewitness to a smashup on the highway. Kopple saw the whole thing, as it was happening; we sense the anguish in her painstaking reconstruction, the desire to get the details right, the need to make some sense of the catastrophe.

In the fall of 1983, Geo. A. Hormel & Company announced that it intended to roll back the wages and benefits of the workers in its Austin, Minnesota, plant. The union, Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, refused to make the concessions. The workers were outraged at being asked to accept $8.25 an hour for jobs that had been paying $10.69 an hour, especially since the company had reported profits of twenty-nine and a half million dollars in that year. The P-9 members, who had been forced in recent years to give up a lucrative work-incentive plan, were determined to hold the line: they weren't buying Hormel's argument about its need to remain competitive with lower-paying companies in the industry. The president of the local, a deceptively soft-spoken and unassuming man named Jim Guyette, was a militant, a leader who inspired his constituency by his unyielding adherence to principle. Guyette's blunt personality was not ideally suited to the intricate art of collective bargaining, and Hormel's negotiators obviously felt that the company's position was so strong that they didn't have to compromise much. Against the advice of the international union, P-9 hired a free-lance New York consultant named Ray Rogers, whose organization, Corporate Campaign, espoused an unorthodox approach to labor disputes. Rogers' strategy consisted mainly of generating negative publicity about the company and its major corporate stockholders, and maintaining that sort of constant pressure until the harassed employer would be compelled to settle on the union's terms.

I'M NOT WEARING A THING FROM THE GAP.
CRAWFORD

VICTORIA'S SECRET

In "American Dream," the arrival of Rogers kicks off a period of euphoric solidarity for the rank and file of P-9. He's a fantastic cheerleader: when he speaks at a union meeting, it turns into something like a high-school pep rally before the big game. Whatever doubts the workers may feel about the course that the local is taking are pushed out of their minds by his ringing optimistic rhetoric. He creates a terrific spirit of community and resolve in the local, and these sequences early in the movie lift our spirits, too: we feel as if we were watching a miraculous resuscitation of the energy and courage that fuelled the labor movement in the thirties. For the past couple of decades, labor has hardly seemed to be a movement at all. The international unions have, for the most part, become bureaucratic and institutional rather than militant and democratic, and in the early eighties Big Labor was being routed in battle after battle, by the anti-union policies of the Reagan Administration. Throughout the country, unions threatened with layoffs and plant closings were accepting concessionary contracts, and seemed powerless to halt the retreat. There wasn't much public support for their struggles, either. The unions had lost their aura of romantic populism, and the Republicans had managed to impart a wicked semantic spin to the concept of the labor movement: from the time Reagan took office, the unions, representing millions of people, were defined as a "special interest" (a distinction they shared with racial minorities and women). In this sort of atmosphere, the rah-rah enthusiasm of Rogers has the effect of sunshine after weeks of rain: he makes everything look possible again.

"American Dream" is unabashedly on the side of the workers. Kopple doesn't give the Hormel executives a lot of screen time to explain their position, and there's no reason she should. The company's argument isn't difficult to understand. Hormel wants to reduce the expense of operating its (new, multimillion-dollar) Austin plant; the simplest way to achieve the reduction is to slash wages and benefits; and the company feels that it has the power to extract such concessions from the union. Yes, there were trends in the meat-packing industry which influenced Hormel's decision. (A 1989 book by Dave Hage and Paul Klauda, "No Retreat, No Surrender: Labor's War at Hormel," gives a more detailed picture of the economic background of the strike.) But morally the conflict between Hormel and P-9 is a no-brainer: the workers are right. Kopple probably brought her cameras to Austin in the hope of capturing images of a rank-and-file labor revolution. In the months before the expiration of P-9's old contract (in August of 1985), Guyette and Rogers looked like the prophets of a newly vigorous style of unionism—men who might be capable of shaking labor out of its lethargy and timidity and defeatism, of reversing the apparently irreversible decline in the fortunes of American industrial workers. At the beginning of "American Dream," both the quietly righteous Guyette and the fiery Rogers are charismatic, galvanizing figures: they're leading the rank and file back to the promised land. The buoyant revivalist spirit of the P-9ers is inspiring: despite the bitterness uniting them against Hormel, they actually look as if they were having fun. And, thanks to Rogers, they're even getting some coverage from the national news media. It's easy to see why an activist filmmaker like Barbara Kopple would want to go to Austin and help spread the word, as she had done with the brave struggle of the Harlan County miners. When the movie turns its attention to the international union, then, the U.F.C.W. officials who object to P-9's tactics sound like killjoys—scared-rabbit bureaucrats, whose caution undermines their locals' will to fight. We see Lewie Anderson, the chief negotiator in the international's meat-packing division, tell the members of P-9 that Rogers' strategy is "doomed." Anderson knows that the local doesn't have the clout to bring Hormel to its knees; he clearly believes that they're going to have to settle for less than $10.69 an hour. The P-9ers think he's a jerk, and so, at first, do we.

Judith Shahn

What makes "American Dream" so emotionally involving, so wrenching, is that after the local's confrontation with Anderson the movie gradually begins to shift its attention from the clearly mapped moral ground of P-9's dispute with Hormel to the more ambiguous territory of the local's relations with the international. The tactical disagreement between Guyette and Anderson turns into a battle that's as fierce as the workers' battle with the company. We watch in horror as the P-9ers' feeling of isolation, fanned by the heated oratory of Guyette and Rogers, becomes a kind of raging paranoia. They begin to believe that they're waging war on two fronts, and the tenuousness of their position only makes them dig in harder. As the situation deteriorates, we see a bunker mentality developing among the leaders and the rank and file of P-9. The local rejects management's final offer, and on August 17, 1985, the workers, cheering and defiant, go out on strike. The company, unfazed, continues to run the plant, at reduced capacity, and makes up for the loss of production in Austin by transferring its functions to other plants and buying meat from other companies (some nonunion). Rogers continues to stage media-ready demonstrations, Guyette insists that his members won't go back to work for less than $10.69 an hour, and there's no progress toward a settlement. The walkout isn't hurting the company, and the Rogers-Guyette strategy is bogged down in stasis and futile repetition. The international, despite its reservations, has sanctioned the strike and is paying the P-9ers its standard strike benefit (forty dollars per person per week), but the local's leaders aren't working with Anderson or anyone else at the U.F.C.W.; it's a standoff on that front, too. The valiant members of P-9 are stranded on a narrowing strip of no man's land; when winter comes, they walk picket lines in below-zero cold with nothing but their sense of local solidarity to keep them warm.

As the strike wears on, our reactions to what we're seeing become more volatile—as irresolvable, we sometimes feel, as the contract dispute at the center of the drama. Our hearts are with Guyette and the pumped-up rank and file of P-9: the movie has provided us, invigoratingly, with a share in their enthusiasm and their hope, and we're reluctant to give back what we've

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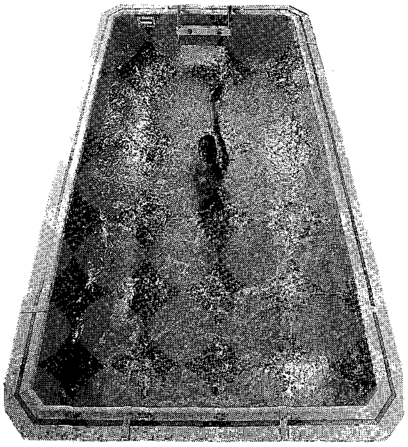

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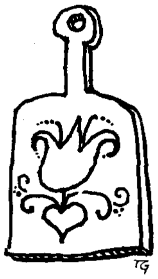
gained. But our heads, increasingly (and surprisingly), are with the pragmatic Lewie Anderson. His initial analysis of the local's chances against the company proves accurate in virtually every particular. With each new turn of events, we come closer to the realization that Hormel has always been holding all the cards—that the only thing P-9 can do is keep bluffing until its small stake runs out. It's as agonizing to watch as a classical tragedy. (The oracles usually came off as jerks, too.) Rogers begins to look like a well-intentioned but dangerous blowhard, and Guyette seems to crumble before our eyes: his moral rectitude and his rhetorical fervor remain constant throughout, but his voice sounds weaker and less confident as the strike's momentum slows to a stop and the company's defenses grow more formidable. Twenty weeks into the walkout, Hormel starts hiring replacement workers, and there's nothing P-9 can do about it. The strikers' attempts to deny the scabs access to the plant are swiftly rebuffed. The National Guard appears on the scene to keep the gates open, and as the troops arrive Kopple cuts to a bleak, heartbreaking shot of Guyette, haggard and sunken-faced, looking on from the back seat of a car: he's wearing a cowboy hat, as if he were ready to ride to the rescue, but he just sits there, immobilized, impotent, watching the men and women he has led into battle scatter in disarray.



At moments like that—and there are many of them—the movie tears you up inside. In one scene, Guyette says, "Belief is something that will carry you a long ways." Kopple's vivid and sympathetic portrayal of the P-9ers has made us believe in them, but the disastrous course of the strike tests that belief relentlessly. We admire them, we understand what they're fighting for, and yet the doubting, weary voice of Lewie Anderson keeps breaking into our thoughts: maybe they're going too far; maybe, in their frustration and their righteous anger, they're collaborating in their own destruction. "American Dream" makes us feel, deep within ourselves, the terrible confusion in the minds of the country's embattled industrial workers: the paralyzing ambivalence about what to do, whom to trust, where to draw the line between the need to stand up for principle and the prospect of economic annihilation. By the time the movie is over, Kopple's level, unflinching gaze has become our way of seeing. She takes us past shock and into a more profound state of empathy, where our rage and our sorrow are keener and yet our judgment, somehow, seems sharper, too. The complex emotional responses this movie evokes can lead us, if we allow them, to a kind of tragic understanding of American life—tragic in the original and the fullest sense, in which the spectacle of unspeakable calamity produces pity and terror and then an unforeseeable and penetrating clarity.

Barbara Kopple couldn't have predicted when she arrived in Austin that several months later she would be setting up her camera in the front seat of a van in order to film the reactions of unhappy P-9 members crossing their own union's picket line. In the movie's most extraordinary sequence, Kopple shows us exactly how it feels to become a scab. Shortly before going back to work, John Morrison—a Guyette opponent, whom we've seen being shouted down at union meetings—and three other men talk to Kopple about their decision, and a couple of them end up weeping: the union and the company together have put them in an impossible bind, and they're about to do something that devastates their sense of themselves. The next day, we ride with them to the plant gates and beyond. The drive seems to take forever, and we hear and see the same things they do: the jeers and angry faces of their friends on the picket line, and then the strange emptiness and silence on the other side of the gate, where they're alone with the consequences of their action. It's a shattering sequence. You don't want to see the world through the eyes of a scab, but for a few minutes you do, and you realize that you have to: you can't understand anything if you don't understand these men. Soon afterward, a title card—white letters on a black background—delivers the news that in the twenty-fifth week of the strike the Hormel plant in Austin is fully staffed: "No jobs remain." My father (who's now retired) belonged to a union. I thought of him, and my eyes blurred with tears.

—TERRENCE RAFFERTY

BOOKS

Queen B.

SARAH BERNHARDT was born Sarah Bernard, in Paris, in 1844, to a young Jewish immigrant from Holland who also happened to be one of the French capital's most successful courtesans. By the time Bernhardt died, also in Paris, seventy-nine years later, she was a baptized Catholic and had remade herself in many other respects as well. She had converted her native willfulness into useful artistic temperament, she had recast her childhood passion to become a nun into a capacity for role-playing on a grand scale, she had alchemized a voice that suffered from a lack of power into an instrument so expressive that French poets came to call it "golden," and she had learned to decant her seizures of feeling into theatrical performances that intoxicated tens of thousands of people around the world, relatively few of whom spoke French.

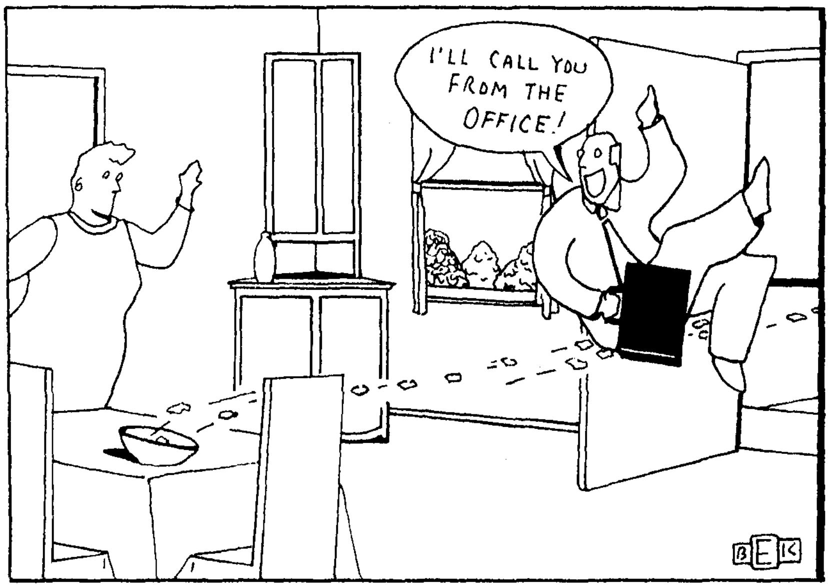
For the throngs that massed along railway lines in order to glimpse her train passing by during her globe-trotting tours, Bernhardt wasn't only impersonating great heroines, and the occasional hero; she was herself a heroine, larger than life. There really is no equivalent for her in living memory. To find the equal of her indomitable stagecraft, beginning with her use of makeup, you'd have to look to the late Laurence Olivier. To appreciate her understanding of stardom and her manipulation of publicity, you'd have to go to Madonna. For her particular tragic cocktail of beauty and sensual pathos, you'd have to go back as far as Anna Pavlova. And still you wouldn't have accounted for Bernhardt's fully equipped (if rarely employed) gift for comedy; for her amazing memory; for her talents as painter, sculptor, writer, and teacher; or for her delicious wickedness where wickedness didn't matter, and her overwhelming humanity where it did. A recent Bernhardt biography, "The Divine Sarah," by Robert Fizdale and the late Arthur Gold (Knopf; $30), reminds us that in 1923, the year of her death, Bernhardt was a devoted great-grandmother, the unofficial world ambassador of the French language, and a working actress in the middle of making a motion picture (Sacha Guitry's "La Voyante"). It's remarkable that she found the time to die.

Of all the qualities we associate with Bernhardt's life—the beauty, the glamour, the gallantry, the fearsome determination, the enlightened self-interest, the posturing in love affairs, the unquenchable zest for adventure, and the highest professionalism—the one that may seem hardest for us to respond to is her emotional extravagance. "I thought I should have fainted," she wrote in her memoirs, "My Double Life," of her reaction to her first visit to a theatre, at the age of fifteen:

> It was as though the curtain of my future life were being raised. Those columns were to be my palaces, the friezes above were to be my skies, and those boards were to bend under my frail weight. I heard nothing of "Britannicus," for I was far, far away.

By the time Sarah got home, she was shaking. She went to bed and didn't get up for six weeks; according to the memoirs, she narrowly escaped dying of brain fever. But, on the mend at last, she found herself on quite another path from the one back to the convent, to which she had been packed off at the age of eight; she was on a beeline to her eventual identity as Sarah Bernhardt—the actress, the Divine. The difference here between Bernhardt and you or me is not in what she felt but, rather, in the force and transparency that characterized her display of feeling. Just as she was naturally energetic—she could function at full strength for days at a time on no more than a few hours of sleep—she was naturally effusive; and that effusiveness had both its lovable and its maddening sides. She didn't harbor grudges, for instance, but when she was crossed she could rage like Xerxes. And out of affection she could make impulsive promises, which she would certainly not be able to keep.

Bernhardt probably never knew her father. (Historians aren't positive about him; the consensus is that he was a handsome law student from Le Havre.) From her mother she endured both neglect and what might be called emotional sadism, but somehow she was able to direct her hurt outward—to communicate it immediately and clearly—and that helped to preserve her personality intact, even though she could be a hellion. She was also fortunate in that from her earliest years—when her mother farmed her out to a peasant family to get her away from Paris, where she could prove embarrassing—she was exposed to surrogate mothers. She acknowledged in her memoirs that some of them became her saving graces, helping her to discharge her furies or to reshape them into benign powers. Then along came the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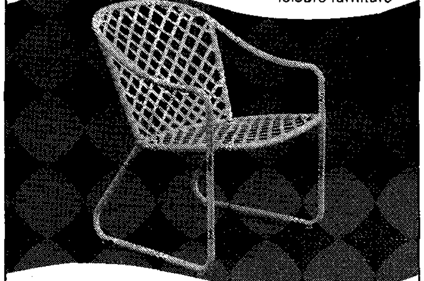

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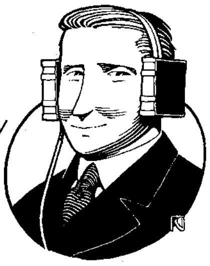

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theatre, which permitted her to act out emotion and be applauded for it. To act, to act out, and to take action meant about the same thing in Bernhardt's life. If Aristotle and Sigmund Freud were right in their belief that catharsis is a form of healing, Sarah Bernhardt must have been one of the healthiest people who ever lived. That may be why Freud, one of her admirers, hung her picture on a wall of his waiting room.

People around Bernhardt liked to speak of how she always seemed to be playing a part, offstage as well as on. At first, reading about her, I thought that by "playing a part" they meant what George Eliot did when she wrote, in "Middlemarch," "Every nerve and muscle in Rosamond was adjusted to the consciousness that she was being looked at. She was by nature an actress of parts that entered into her *physique;* she even acted her own character, and so well that she did not know it to be precisely her own." But the testimony about Bernhardt suggests that, to the contrary, she knew herself so well and had such intellectual range and self-confidence that she was able to conduct herself in a manner exactly appropriate to every occasion. An extraordinary example is her conversation immediately before and after the operation she underwent in 1915, when her right leg was removed at the thigh, in consequence of several bad falls. A report of the operation was written by a young woman anesthetist who assisted; it is one of many revealing, hitherto unpublished documents that enrich Gold and Fizdale's biography. "At 10 A.M. the great artist was wheeled into the operating room," the report begins. It goes on:

> She was dressed in a white satin peignoir and swathed in pink crepe-de-chine veils. She seemed very calm. She sent for her son Maurice who came to embrace her. During the tender scene she was heard to say "Au revoir, my beloved, my Maurice, au revoir. There, there, I'll be back soon." It was the same voice I had heard in *La Tosca*, *La Dame aux Camélias*, *L'Aiglon*. Turning to Denucé [the surgeon] she said: "My darling, give me a kiss." Then to me, "Mademoiselle, I'm in your hands. Promise you'll really put me to sleep. Let's go, quickly, quickly." In all this one could not help seeing the tragedienne putting on an act. I felt I was at the theatre except that I myself had a role in the painful drama.

When Sarah came to after the operation, she started calling for the same people, in the same order. "One feels she is always acting," the anesthetist wrote, "playing the role of someone who has just undergone a grave operation." She admired this trait in Bernhardt very much. Later in the day, the anesthetist visited the patient and found her eyes made up and her lips painted. "It was a great joy for me," she wrote, "to be so close to the actress, who, one might say, has ruled the universe through her art."

Did the process also work the other way around—did Bernhardt make her art conform to her experience of the universe? Her own writing seems to point that way. Take her propensity for tears. Near the end of her life, she wrote some essays on acting. (They were gathered under the title "The Art of the Theatre" and were published posthumously, in 1924.) In them she speaks of the provocation of emotion as the theatre's specific goal, and suggests that the most important of the actions to which an actor could stir an audience was weeping. She wrote, "When a popular audience is moved to tears by the anguish of the actor, when forgetting theatrical convention it imagines that it is present at a real drama, the actor will know that he has achieved the object of his art: he may pride himself on having been natural."

People still cry in the theatre, but it would be unusual today to find an actor writing approvingly of techniques to induce such crying, which have come to be known as tear-jerking. Since Bernhardt's time, the aesthetics of stage acting have changed radically, in part as a reaction to the emotionalism that she espoused. As film technology was refined, actors in all media became used to performing in an era of enlargement and amplification; the ability to display one's physical responses through the smallest gestures and the least emphatic sounds became the virtuoso's trademark. In addition, actors and directors felt the impact in their field of certain ideas about the scientific relationship between the internal perception and the expressive projection of emotion—ideas that had been evolving during the latter half of the nineteenth century. (Freud was only sixteen in 1872, when Charles Darwin published "The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals.") And the allegiance to physical beauty

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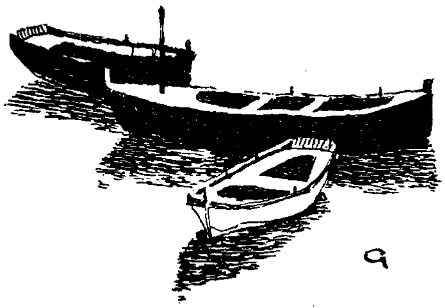
so fervently held by Bernhardt and by many other artists of the time, was abandoned. In "Building a Character"—the second book of Konstantin Stanislavski's three-volume study of acting, which was completed in the late thirties—one sees how decisively the ground has shifted from the idea that beauty is truth to the idea that truth is beauty. Stanislavski said:

> There are those who think that nature often works poorly, that our dramatic technique can improve on her, give proof of greater taste. To some esthetically minded people taste is of more consequence than truth. But in the instant when a crowd of thousands is being moved, when they are all swept by one great feeling of enthusiasm, no matter what the physical shortcomings of the actors or actresses who cause this emotional storm—is it a matter of taste, conscious creation, technique, or is it that unknown something which is possessed by and possesses the genius, who has no power over it?
>
> At such times even a deformed person becomes beautiful.

Bernhardt would not have agreed with Stanislavski's conclusion. She believed in genius, unquestionably, but she also believed that it was released *through* the exercise of taste, conscious creation, and technique. And, as her efforts to make audiences forget that her leg had been amputated attest, she believed that it was certainly possible for a deformed person to become beautiful—but backstage, ahead of time. Beauty on the stage was nature; it was air, water, and light. It was the given. The purpose of theatrical illusion was to persuade you that the beautiful could become deformed.

I USED to know a man who would say to his young daughter when he felt that her tears weren't entirely sincere, "Don't pull a Sarah Bernhardt on me." Bernhardt's name today tends to evoke associations of staginess, possibly camp. Yet once you start to learn about her, even at the remove of pictures and books, of silent films made late in her career, or of recordings that caught her "golden voice" after time had darkened its honey, her enthusiasm can catch you up, and before you know it she's all but irresistible. One would need to be George Bernard Shaw not to fall a little bit in love with her. (Shaw, who was Bernhardt's most vigorous and incisive critic, wrote that her acting was "the art of finding out all your weaknesses and practising on them—cajoling you, harrowing you, exciting you—on the whole, fooling you.") At every age, she presented a mesmerizing face to the camera and the canvas. Energy pours from her. You find it early, as in the gripping studio portraits that Félix Nadar made of her around the time she entered the Conservatoire, when she was fifteen and still had a pound or two of baby fat. With her wayward, jungly hair, her impeccably manicured fingernails, and her blazing gaze, she could be a precocious high-school student of the nineteen-nineties. A slightly later photograph places her vitality in a sexual context: she stands, in the nude, holding to her face a fan that reveals a single, flirtatious eye. Even when her body finally betrayed her, the intensity remained. There is a very late photograph of her peering out of a car window at a handsome man nearby, who is speaking. All you can see of her is her face, now jowly and sagging, with the eyes drowned in shadow, but obviously belonging to a woman who is determined to catch the man's every word. (As it happens, the man was the escape artist Houdini.)

Bernhardt's enchantment is more than a matter of personality, though. The look of her body is important: its balletic proportions, its aristocratic bearing, and, into the twentieth century, its uncorseted slenderness. Like a dancer's body, Bernhardt's gives a sharp focus to physical attitudes and gestures. Bernhardt was not a womanly beauty, like some of her great colleagues—Ellen Terry, Mrs. Patrick Campbell. When she was past middle age, she still made an adolescent effect. The dominant quality is youth. (It's no surprise that as time went on she increasingly played travesty roles, as long as the male characters were young.) As we look back on Bernhardt now, from the end of a century in which this particular endowment has been elevated by the ballets of George Balanchine to an image of celestial perfection, her streamlined beauty registers as a quality that we recognize. Audiences of her own time did not have that privilege, however, and she was savagely ridiculed in the press for what was deemed freakish emaciation. In the matter of physique, she generalized outward from the personal. In "The Art of the Theatre," the topic of physical proportions, especially for women, is accorded a full essay, as one of five characteristics that Bernhardt felt were essential for the profession (the others being memory, the voice, pronunciation, and gesture). "An actor must be tall, have a good figure, an expressive and pleasing face, and nothing that detracts from the general harmony of his body," she wrote, adding that only genius could compensate if the actor should suffer from the misfortune of being below average height. "From the actress the spectator demands even more," she says, and goes on:



> So far as she is concerned, the most perfect technique cannot compensate for the physical grace, the charm, and the fascination that emanates from woman. No doubt by will power and by work she may prolong her youth, and even after middle age give the illusion of freshness and adolescence. But if she lacks the necessary figure, if she is without the minimum of gracefulness, or is defective in originality, if nature has endowed her so unkindly that she cannot appear on the stage without repelling the audience at first sight, she will do wise to abandon all her hopes of succeeding as an actress.

Bernhardt adds, "It is rare for a woman's face to be entirely ugly, especially if she is animated by the desire to please; and this should always be the aim of an actress, whatever her part, even if it be that of a mother-in-law."

THIS last sentence is a hard one to accept, because of its implicit sexual politics and its evocation of the "grand horizontals" in Bernhardt's family. Bernhardt's name remains linked with prostitution, partly because of her origins, partly because of her own many love affairs (some of which may have led to favorable opportunities in her career), and partly because for a period of several years she seems to have supported herself as a demimondaine. The link has unfairly damaged her legend, perhaps permanently. Even today, one hears her spoken of as a star who slept her way to the top, and she is associated with figures like Marilyn Monroe. But with men Bernhardt was rarely a victim of her vulnerability. Most of her liaisons were initiated by the strength of her desires, and when an affair cooled she tended to keep the ex-lover on as a close friend. Her one legal marriage, however, proved disastrous. It capped her passion, in middle age, for a much younger and rather heartless man, a Greek diplomat named Aristidis Damala. Bernhardt was overwhelmed by ardor for him, and she went as far as to put him onstage, opposite her, in leading parts. (He turned out to have a mild talent for acting but also a major drug addiction, and that eventually led to his death, in a run-down apartment, at the age of forty-two.) With Damala, the line that defined Bernhardt's "double life"—a mistress of literary emotion in public and, to herself, a piece of flotsam in a sea of feeling—came close to being erased. But the fact that one can register this possibility as atypical shows how firmly Bernhardt maintained the distinction between her dressing room and the stage. Unfortunately for her artistic reputation, it was too delicate a distinction for some in the audience to bear in mind. A common note in the most formidable criticisms of her is that her acting was counterfeit, as if she were carrying on a winking conspiracy with the audience behind the back of the play. That's how she struck not only Shaw but other playwrights—like Chekhov and Turgenev—who didn't want anyone using plays for ulterior motives. They preferred Eleonora Duse, who seemed to put herself at the service of the script, thereby courting the playwright rather than the audience.

Bernhardt's acting basically attracted two kinds of fans: people who responded to her emotional bravura, and connoisseurs who treasured the sonorities of French. Among the latter group was Marcel Proust, who immortalized her in "Remembrance of Things Past" through the figure of an actress he calls Berma. At one point, Proust's narrator, Marcel, sees Berma perform an excerpt from "Phèdre." (For Bernhardt and Rachel, the other nfluence on the Berma character, Racine's Phèdre was a signature role.) Marcel is not a clear-eyed professional critic, and in his excitement his language gets knotty, but when you unangle it you find that he has given you wo qualities of Bernhardt's voice: her

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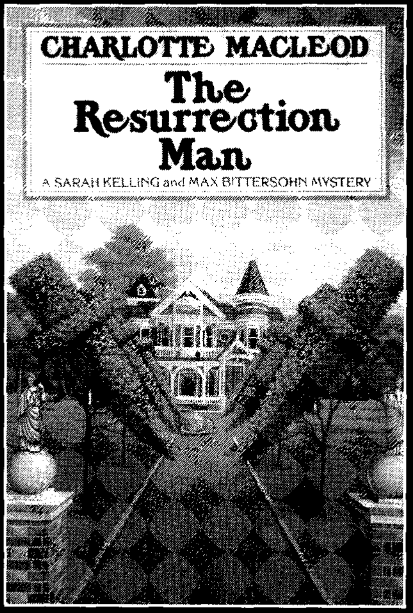
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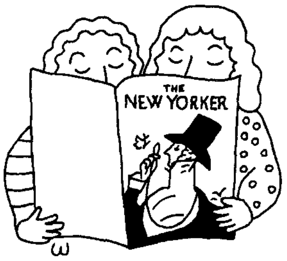

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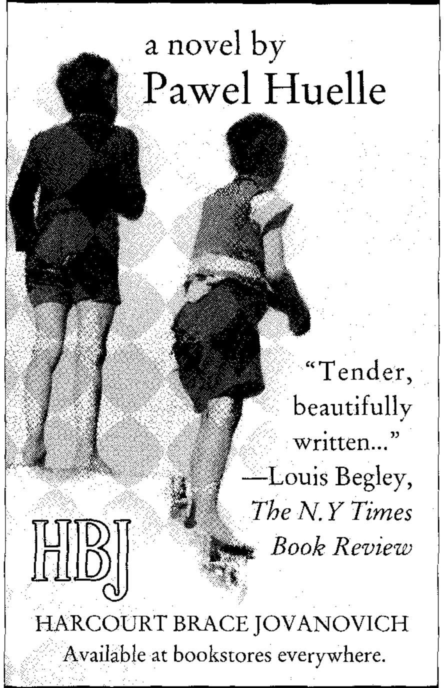

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famous talent for producing an effect of tears in her speech without crying, and her electrifying ability to maintain crackerjack-perfect diction while speaking so quickly that her words almost seemed to flow together in a wash of evocative sound.

> Berma's voice, in which not one atom of lifeless matter refractory to the mind remained undissolved, did not allow any sign to be discernible around it of that overflow of tears which one could feel, because they had not been able to absorb it in themselves, trickling over the marble voice of Aricie or Ismène, but had been brought to an exquisite perfection in each of its tiniest cells like the instrument of a master violinist, in whom one means, when one says that his music has a fine sound, to praise not a physical peculiarity but a superiority of soul. . . .
>
> As the painter dissolves houses, carts, people, in some broad effect of light which makes them all alike, so Berma spread out great sheets of terror or tenderness over words that were all melted together in a common mould, lowered or raised to one level, which a lesser artist would have carefully detached from one another. No doubt each of them had an inflexion of its own, and Berma's diction did not prevent one from catching the rhythm of the verse.

Perhaps because he was not a playwright, Proust could also appreciate that Bernhardt was greater as an actress than most contemporary playwrights were as writers, and he must have recognized that, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, she had reached a moment of crisis. For drama was on the point of turning from a medium driven by actors into one driven by playwrights and directors, whose ideas the actors were expected to serve. Bernhardt could not be that kind of animal: the words served her. After "Phèdre," Berma comes on for an encore with what Marcel calls "one of those novelties which at one time I had expected, since they were not famous, to be inevitably trivial and of no general application, devoid as they were of any existence outside the performance that was being given of them at the moment." But the novelty, too, proves an occasion for marvelling:

> Berma was as sublime in one as in the other. I realised then that the work of the playwright was for the actress no more than the material, the nature of which was comparatively unimportant, for the creation of her masterpiece of interpretation, just as the great painter whom I had met at Balbec, Elstir, had found the inspiration for two pictures of equal merit in a school building without any character and a cathedral which was in itself a work of art.

In "The Divine Sarah" Gold and Fizdale suggest that Bernhardt was the last star of the old style of acting and Duse the first star of the new style. It may also be useful to think of Bernhardt in the company of virtuosos from other arts. In her charisma, her methods, and her effect on audiences, she is more like one of the nineteenth century's idolized concertizing instrumentalists—Paganini, Liszt—than like other actresses, beginning with Duse, whose greatness was based on a very different sense of the relationship between the performer and the text. Rapturous accounts of performances by Duse and by Mrs. Campbell usually stress the way these artists illuminated the meaning of the playwright's words through concentration on the most minute levels of grammatical organization. Bernhardt operated in longer, cantilena-like units. As Proust indicated, the audience suspended its need to know the significance of every word at every moment so as to enter into a stream of sound from which key words would sail up suddenly. The experience was both more abstract and more intimate than anything we derive from the theatre now: it was closer to music or dance. It was a theatre of ideas about feeling.

Meanwhile, complementing the music of Bernhardt's voice was the spectacle of her action. Bernhardt struck attitudes, and she would work out pose-to-pose sequences of them—again, in long, cantilena-like phrases, and often according to the theme-and-variations form typical of choreography. Had Bernhardt spoken English, she might have been one of the greatest of all Shakespeareans. As it was, she triumphed in repertory that gave her chances to change emotional gears frequently, and without resorting to the modernist discontinuities of silence and stillness for every switch. She was the actress of Racine, Hugo, Rostand, Sardou, Dumas. One can imagine her in works by Tennessee Williams or Eugene O'Neill. One can imagine her—as long as we're imagining—in Balanchine's "La Sonnambula," or in the second movement of his "Symphony in C," which calls for the kinesthetic equivalent of her capacity for suggesting tears without crying.

"THE DIVINE SARAH" is the second, and last, biography by the team of Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, who were also for many years a famous piano duo. (Gold died in 1990.) In their first biography, "Misia"—the story of Misia Sert, the Paris art patron and friend of Diaghilev—Sarah Bernhardt makes a couple of cameo appearances, playing herself. The year is 1900, and, at the age of fifty-five, she is preparing to perform the title role of Rostand's "L'Aiglon":

> "Offstage," observed Léon Daudet, "Madame Bernhardt is most natural and unaffected; absolutely simple, without the least pose of any kind, not even that of simplicity." Bernhardt could hardly be accused of simplicity when she received visitors dressed as Napoleon's son, sword in hand, leading her pet panther on a leash. For weeks before the opening, the dedicated actress wore the stiff and glittering uniform designed for her by the young Paul Poiret so that she would feel at ease in it. Her dedication was rewarded; she played *l'Aiglon* two hundred and thirty-six times to ecstatic audiences.

This tone characterizes "The Divine Sarah." The authors, as befits successful musicians, treat Bernhardt's professional discipline and popular success with reverence, while taking an amused approach to her literalizing expressions of that discipline and drive. They seem fascinated by her place in the Proustian world (Misia Sert also served as an inspiration for Proust), and by the costumes and appointments of that world for their own sake. Of the Bernhardt biographies in English, "The Divine Sarah" provides the most fully observed scene-setting detail. The authors also demonstrate an interest in what one might call the sociology of gossip. They write with special insight about Bernhardt and her "court"—the people she arranged around her, most of them artists and writers, to provide her with new ideas, amusement, sympathy, advice, and companionship. (In return, she fed them lavishly, fixed them up with workspace, occasionally built them houses, and admitted them to some of her most charming performances of Bernhardt without tears.) Gold and Fizdale view their unique access to some of Bernhardt's personal papers as a privilege and a responsibility. They quote generously from the new material, and they try to show, without forcing an interpretation, how t illuminates her character. In essence, their method vis-à-vis other modern Bernhardt biographies is analogous to the way the knowing Georges Clairin portrait of Bernhardt has been eproduced on their book's dust jacket. It is the most famous portrait of the actress, and has been used on a number of Bernhardt books, but here the entire

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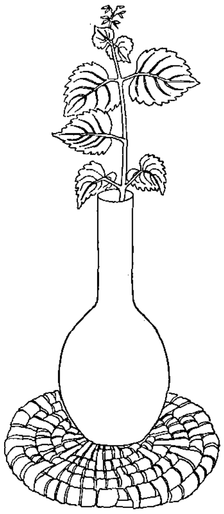
image is shown, the color is sharp, and the style of the adjacent lettering is apt. There is no cropping, flopping, or deliberately muted color to give an antique effect. This meticulous approach reinforces one of the major themes of "The Divine Sarah"—Bernhardt's enormous influence on her time as a visual image. The book takes this theme seriously throughout, offering several portfolios of illustrations: keepsake images of Bernhardt in color and in black-and-white—photographs, paintings, posters, caricatures. Here, in sum, is Bernhardt at work and play, in her myriad guises, from coquetry to troubled reflection, at nearly every age. Perhaps out of their own gallantry, the authors do not show her face candidly in advanced old age; the photograph with Houdini described earlier appears in "Madame Sarah," a best-selling 1967 biography by Cornelia Otis Skinner.

Of these two biographies, Skinner's may be the wittier and more strictly organized, but it keeps Bernhardt at arm's length, as a legend. Gold and Fizdale bring her into closer range—sometimes for the purpose of pulling her off a pedestal but also, I think, to make us appreciate the scope and depth of her humanity. They relish her scandals, but they love her character more. Typical of their devotion to her large nature is their inclusion of the full text of a long letter from Bernhardt to her doctor, in 1915. In it, she implores him to put an end to her suffering and cut off her leg. "I prefer a wooden leg," she writes. "That way I could take it off and bathe every day. That alone would improve my health a hundred percent. I'll give lecture tours, I'll give lessons, and be gay. I don't want to lose my gaiety. At this moment lads of twenty are losing their legs, and their arms, meant for embraces."



There's so much to Bernhardt's life that you barely need to mention her acting. Her heroism could by itself fill a small volume. There was the time she ran into a burning building and rescued her small son and her grandmother, who were trapped inside. There was the time, in 1870, when she set up a hospital for French soldiers during the German siege of Paris, and nursed the wounded and dying around the clock for days at a stretch. There was the time she stood up for Alfred Dreyfus, even though her beloved son, Maurice—the one man in her life she never tired of—stopped speaking to her for a year, because he supported the anti-Dreyfusards. There was the time, during the First World War, that she had herself, one leg now gone, carried on a litter into a battle zone so that she could recite poetry of courage to the French boys fighting there. Such dramatic events Gold and Fizdale investigate wholeheartedly.

But to gain some sense of what those soldiers actually heard in Bernhardt's performance one must seek out a different sort of study. "The Divine Sarah" doesn't try to present a coherent perspective on Bernhardt's professional self—her acting technique, her process of selecting repertory, her contributions to stagecraft. An outline is sketched in, but it keeps splintering into picturesque details. Gold and Fizdale have consulted the sources that would permit them to address such an assignment, but they don't really have the impulse to carry it out. They write, "Analysis of [Bernhardt's] technique merely hints at her powers. One can only imagine that her Marguerite [in "La Dame aux Camélias"] stirred the sensations one has felt, when, profoundly moved, one experiences the hypnotic magic of a unique artist." In other words, they bring down the curtain on the very subject that one yearns to see analyzed in the light of day. The English theatre historian John Stokes puts the case bluntly in a 1988 study of nineteenth-century actresses, written with his colleagues Michael R. Booth and Susan Bassnett, called "Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in Her Time":

> We know more about Sarah Bernhardt than we do about any other nineteenth-century actress. We have paintings and photographs, recordings and films, reviews and memoirs. We have the texts of the plays in which she appeared and, in some instances, her own *livrets de scène*. If Bernhardt is misunderstood, it is not because she is under-documented, but because so much that we admire on our stage today has developed in direct reaction to all that she came to stand for.

The subject of Stokes's essay is Bernhardt's years as an actor-producer and the owner of several theatres. It discusses her box-office receipts and her repertory, with special attention to the melodramas she commissioned from Sardou. It offers a theory about what made Bernhardt's performances—notably, her death scenes—unforgettable: "In many respects the secret of Bernhardt's acting seems to have been the continual repetition of movements, gestures and expressions from a variety of stage positions." It also traces Bernhardt's considerable influence on English acting into the nineteen-fifties.

"Bernhardt, Terry, Duse" is an excellent window on Bernhardt as entrepreneur, but to learn about Sarah Bernhardt's acting in depth you want "Sarah Bernhardt: The Art Within the Legend," by Gerda Taranow—the 1972 book to which Stokes acknowledges indebtedness. Taranow analyzes the technique of Bernhardt's most famous death scene—as Marguerite—and although the analysis, indeed, "merely hints at her powers," it succeeds in delineating Bernhardt's taste and her understanding of the play, and spells out her working definitions of stage magic. Taranow's book documents the unstinting preparation that Bernhardt accorded every role. It traces what she learned at the Conservatoire, what she retained from inherited tradition, and what she added from popular, Boulevard theatre. It makes a case for classifying her voice not as a "golden mezzo" at all but as a silvery coloratura. It suggests how she provided Comédie-Française audiences with a comparatively plaintive and sensuous alternative to the classical austerity of Rachel. It describes how she designed her costumes to give her five-foot frame the appearance of a longer line. It analyzes her films and recordings so that when you revisit them they seem alive with meaning. It takes you through her roles so that you can see her artistic career as an evolving story rather than as an omnium-gatherum of unrelated anecdotes. It distinguishes her practice of pantomime from her use of gesture. It discusses her predilection for opulent tableaux of the sort that may have helped prepare Parisians to be bowled over by the first seasons of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

Doubtless Bernhardt would have found all this too dry for words: Taranow's book may be the only full-length study of Sarah Bernhardt that does not set out to please. Yet it constitutes the biography of her soul. When read in conjunction with "The Divine Sarah"—the fullest and most satisfying biography of her ego—it gives you the other half of the double life.

—Mindy Aloff

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Fortunate Lives, by Robb Forman Dew (Morrow; $20). In this sequel to "Dale Loves Sophie to Death," the Howells family still lives in the affluent New England town where Martin edits a literary review and teaches at the local college; in the intervening time, however, their younger son has been killed in a car accident. This story begins six years after his death, the summer before their remaining son is to leave home for college, and although the summer begins with the usual round of picnics and impromptu dinner parties, the family is rippling with tension, bracing itself against further loss. Ms. Dew is equally good at conveying the sensuality of domestic tasks smoothly performed and the exhausting double-edged nature of family negotiations during times of strife—the beloved ritual that suddenly becomes a burden, or the well-meaning compliment that is perceived as an invasion or a betrayal. But the irony of the novel's title lies in its truth: despite the small cruelties that scratch the surface of their daily life and the terrible tragedy that lies beneath it, the deep love the Howellses hold for one another bathes their world in a golden wash of light.

A Case of Curiosities, by Allen Kurzweil (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $19.95). Five years of research went into this historical novel by a youthful Yale graduate and Fulbright Fellow, and five years of research is just what you get. If you want to know about the eighteenth-century diet (magdalene pears and frog fricassee), or thrill to see testicles referred to as "cullions," or wish to learn more about taxidermy, archaic surgical practices, clockworks, and French shipping laws, then this is the book for you. If you want to

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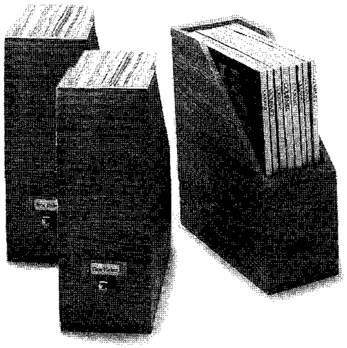

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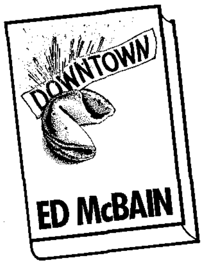

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know about its hero, Claude Page, you will learn that he is the son of a vanished watchmaker and his herbalist wife, that he has a mole that looks like the face of Louis XVI, that he is a gifted draftsman who is recruited by a local aristocrat to construct pornographic illustrations for watches, and that he goes to Paris to have adventures of the kind that bright young men who seek their fortunes are supposed to have. You will not learn what it feels like to be Claude, or to know the semi-stock characters he encounters. The story prides itself on resembling a clock's works, and it does.

GENERAL

The Death of an American Jewish Community: A Tragedy of Good Intentions, by Hillel Levine and Lawrence Harmon (Free Press; $24.95). This candid, disturbing, and highly readable book recounts how Boston's working-class Jewish neighborhoods were transformed into economically devastated black ghettos. By the nineteen-sixties, whites had been moving to the suburbs as they got richer, and the city felt the need of an inner-city redevelopment program. Substandard housing was razed and replaced by new construction that the former occupants couldn't afford, and thousands of African-Americans were left with nowhere to live. The riots that followed Martin Luther King's assassination, in April, 1968, inspired a new program: Boston banks, with a federal guarantee, would lend poor black people money to buy houses—but only in Jewish neighborhoods. The efforts of well-intentioned Jews and blacks to live peaceably together were undermined by crime and speculative blockbusting, and the community was effectively destroyed, both for blacks and for Jews.

Teller's War: The Top-Secret Story Behind the Star Wars Deception, by William J. Broad (Simon & Schuster; $25). This report details how the indefatigable hyperbole of an aging, illustrious, and influential physicist, Dr. Edward Teller, persuaded the Reagan Administration that the Strategic Defense Initiative—Star Wars—could be put into effect in almost no time, and that it could protect the United States in case of a nuclear attack. Neither of these promises, or hopes, has come near fulfillment. Most of the book deals with Teller's unrealistic enthusiasm for the X-ray laser, a weapon that so far hasn't worked, and with his savage five-year campaign against Roy Woodruff, a physicist at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, who tried to correct Teller's exaggerations. Though the book is extremely critical of Teller, its last chapter, summing up the pluses and minuses of S.D.I. and stating the contributions that Teller has made to the defense of the West, is a model of clarity and charity.

Poets, Poetics, and Politics: America's Literary Community Viewed from the Letters of Rolfe Humphries, 1910-1969, edited by Richard Gillman and Michael Paul Novak (Kansas; $35). These letters reveal not only America's literary community but (abetted by a fine biographical essay, by Ruth Limmer) Humphries himself: poet, Latin teacher, classical scholar, critic, and translator. The correspondence begins shortly before Humphries entered Amherst, and consists mostly of letters to his literary peers, notably Louise Bogan, a lifelong friend despite their political squabbles; Edmund Wilson; and Theodore Roethke, whose mentor he was. The letters abound in peppery opinions and fair-minded yet uncompromising critical appraisals of fellow poets and writers, and reflect Humphries' humorous outlook on life and the catholicity of his interests—Catullus, Ovid, baseball, the racetrack. He left a body of beautifully wrought lyric poetry, and a number of translations—the Aeneid, Ovid's Metamorphoses, and García Lorca's "Gypsy Ballads" among them—that are unsurpassed. This book is a wonderfully appropriate memorial.

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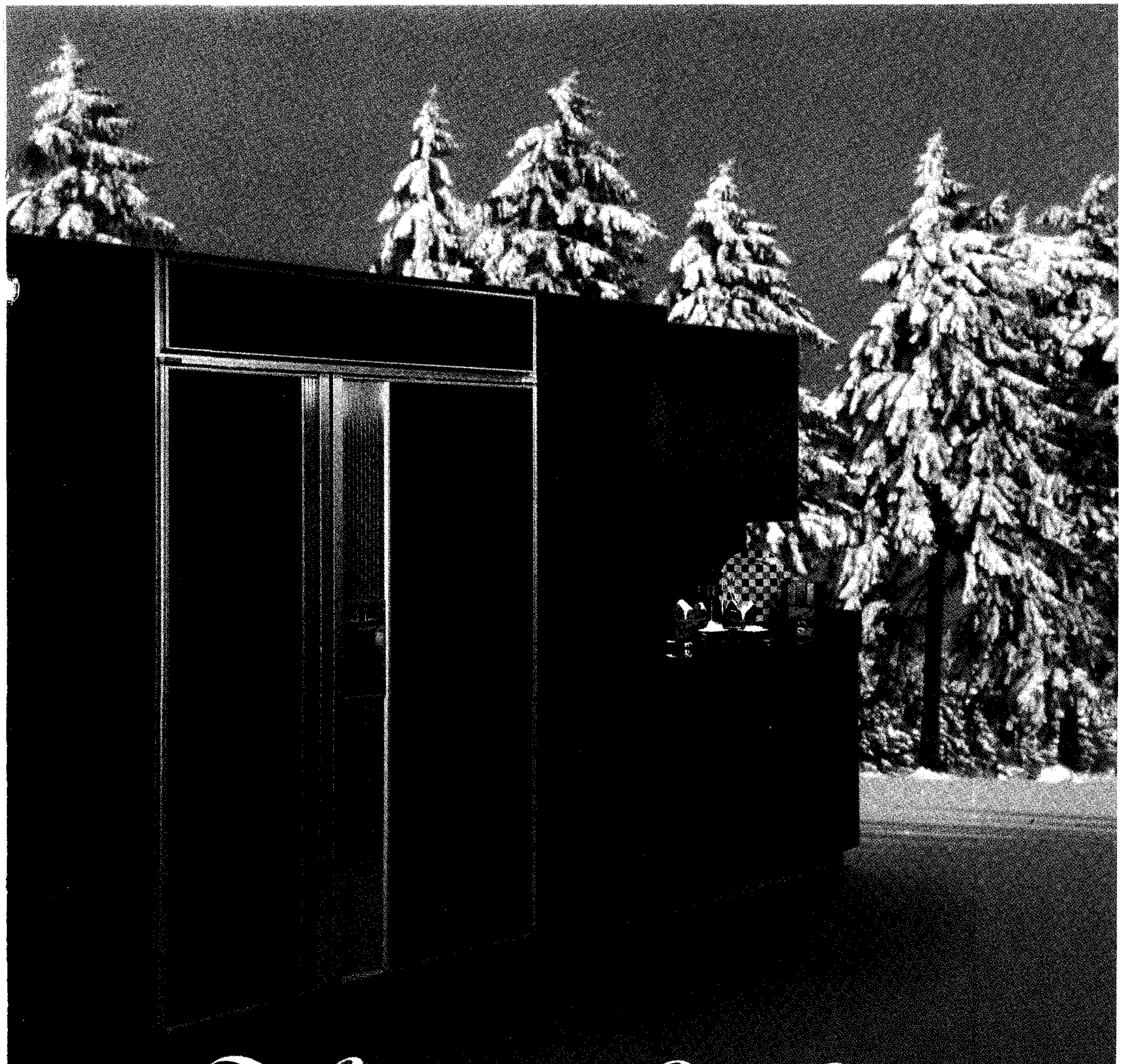

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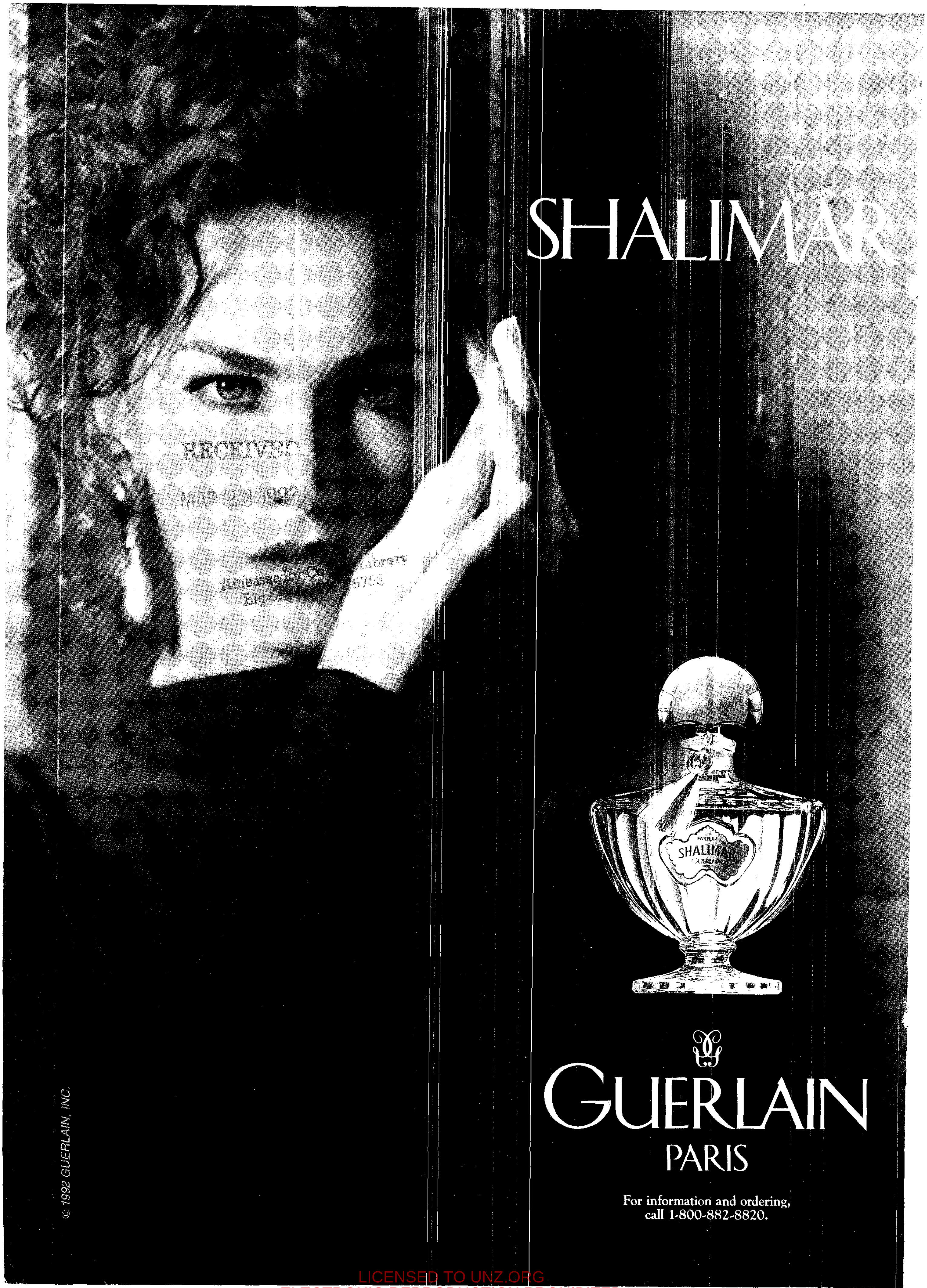
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